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President:	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein	(Jordan)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

War, its lessons, and the search for a permanent peace

Letter dated 14 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/30)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

War, its lessons, and the search for a permanent peace

Letter dated 14 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/30)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Montenegro, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mays-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/30, which contains a letter dated 14 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: I thank you, Sir, for inviting me to represent the Secretary-General today in addressing the Council on the item "War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace". The relevance and timeliness of this debate are all too clear when we look to Syria, South Sudan or the Central African Republic at the moment.

The founders of the United Nations, in seeking to end the scourge of war, had in the forefront of their minds the searing experience of a global conflagration that pitted States against States. In more recent years, the United Nations has often been called upon to contribute to ending conflicts inside States rather than between States. Moreover, in a point relevant for today's debate, even as conflicts between States lessen in number, conflicts inside States too often reoccur.

In both types of conflicts, distortions of history and identity can be contributing factors. Wartime rhetoric cultivates division. Helping groups inside States move beyond such zero-sum thinking to accepting a shared national narrative is especially hard. The United Nations has a long history of helping to establish the means to resolve territorial disputes, but reconciling competing visions of history and identity is far less of a developed science.

While we hope to contribute to permanent peace when we act — be it as members of the Security Council or the Secretariat — past crises have shown that the immediate imperatives tend to be so overpowering that what appear to be longer-term aspects often receive less attention, even though peacebuilding is now an indispensable part of our conflict management and prevention work. In other words, while we have time-tested formulas for separating armies, for tending to the needy, for enacting political road maps and rebuilding actual roads and ministries, we have reflected less on our ability to repair trust in societies and foster genuine reconciliation. How can we mend shattered social fabrics so that people look in their adversary's eyes once again and see the human being rather than the enemy?

In the time I have to explore this topic today, I will address two main questions. What are the essential elements of reconciliation? And how should the United Nations approach to crisis management be combined with the imperative of enabling societies to heal?

So, what are the essential elements of reconciliation? When I refer to reconciliation, I have the following in mind — accounting for and sharing views about the past, including prior to conflict, in order to restore mutual respect and trust between groups and individuals. To make this a reality, I see a double responsibility. First is the responsibility of the international community to assist in creating conditions that, secondly, enable national actors to live up to their responsibility for rebuilding trust and respect, including reckoning with their own behaviour and actions

Rebuilding trust and respect requires engaging with one another at all levels of society, not just at the level of political and economic elites. Leaders need to set the example, not just by ceasing wartime rhetoric and ending the intentional promotion of grievances, but also by undertaking deeds of genuine cooperation and honest examinations of their own roles in conflict. Leaders also need to demonstrate that power-sharing and other forms of post-conflict governance signify not that the winner takes all, but that room is available for engagement for all parts of society.

It is often being said that youth is the hope for overcoming past hatred. However, reality shows that young people brought up just after war tend to be more extreme than their parents. By often being deprived of the chance to meet "the other", they are also deprived of the chance to experience what they have in common. So, we need to find ways in our work in the aftermath of conflict to break the vicious cycle of divided communities when the hatred and sense of victimhood are most pronounced and palpable. Working with teachers and parents is as important as working with the young people themselves.

More broadly, education and curriculums tend to be disseminators of contentious narratives. As difficult as it is, it appears critical to start early with the development of history curricula that, at the very least, share the different interpretations of recent events. This could form the beginning of developing a shared narrative and establishing points of convergence in people's experiences and thinking.

Let me now turn to my second question. How can the United Nations approach to crisis management be combined with the imperative of enabling societies to heal?

Over the past few months, the Council has, along with other business, expressed alarm about the catastrophic situation in the Central African Republic, the ongoing slaughter in Syria and the outbreak of brutal hostilities in South Sudan. While outside forces play roles in each of these conflicts, the root causes, initial sparks and momentum of these conflicts are essentially internal. In all three cases, the physical end to war, while urgently needed, will not produce lasting peace and security. In all three countries, an end to the fighting will not permanently end the conflict. As we have seen repeatedly, fighting that ends without reconciliation — especially fighting inside States — is fighting that can and often does resume.

In the Central African Republic, religious communities that peacefully coexisted for generations now view each other not as neighbours but as enemies. As difficult as ending the fighting is, rebuilding a shared sense of community and forging a common narrative about recent events will be even harder, but it is essential if the citizens of the Central African Republic are ever to enjoy lasting peace and stability.

In South Sudan, a beautiful story of a country gaining hard-won independence has now turned into an ethnically charged conflict with deaths, displacement and calls for revenge. What united different groups during the fight for independence has evaporated. With a ceasefire signed, there is a glimmer of hope, but if it is to take root and hold we will need to help the parties to trust one another again.

In Syria, the shared memory and pride in a secular, multiconfessional and multi-ethnic State have been shattered by nearly three years of unspeakable brutality and human rights atrocities. We have reported to the Council repeatedly that we do not believe that there is a military solution to this conflict, and that the costs of trying to impose a military solution are obscenely high. Collectively, we must help the Syrians stop the killing. But then what? Clearing the physical rubble and physical reconstruction are not sufficient to erase the grievances, hatreds and instincts for vengeance that are undoubtedly multiplying in Syria with each passing day.

In all three cases, any cessation of hostilities will remain fragile and at risk of collapse without strenuous efforts exerted on behalf of reconciliation and without the honest examination by each community of its own role in the conflict. There are many examples we could cite, but please allow me to use Iraq as a case in point.

In recent years, Iraq has registered many successes, including holding a series of national elections under extremely difficult circumstances and re-establishing positive relations with Kuwait. We all applaud the Security Council's recognition of Iraq's progress, as noted by the Council's resolutions. Yet, at the same time, we have seen that Iraq's communities have sharply differing historical and political narratives that inhibit the country's ability to achieve common goals, including the urgent fight against terrorism. Getting more Iraqis to move past zero-sum thinking to forge a common Iraqi narrative is hard, but it is essential for Iraq's long-term peace and stability.

The open wound of the Syria conflict makes Iraqi reconciliation even more complicated, given the deepening regional crisis between Sunnis and Shia. Healing the Sunni-Shia rift will become easier when the fighting in Syria ends, as the horrors in Syria exacerbate that divide. But we should not neglect lending support to genuine reconciliation efforts, lest fighting resume from unaddressed grievances, overlapping claims of victimhood and zero-sum narratives that are undoubtedly already taking root and, in some cases, being intentionally promoted.

The role of the United Nations in monitoring ceasefires or separating warring parties is well known, represented by almost 120,000 peacekeepers in 15 places around the world. Those peacekeeping operations, typically with robust protection-of-civilian mandates given by the Council, serve in some places to prevent State-to-State conflicts — the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, in the south of the country, is one example — and in other places serve inside a State, such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations has also played a significant role in reconstruction efforts in previously war-torn countries, such as Sierra Leone or Mozambique.

Those are important, physical manifestations of the United Nations work to help end conflict. But beyond the physical manifestations — peacekeepers, monitors, reconstruction and development — the United Nations has also become increasingly involved in the non-physical aspects of peacebuilding. The goal is to promote long-term peace and security, and not stop with helping achieve cessations of violence that too often may prove fleeting.

What we currently witness in Yemen is particularly noteworthy. The agreement for the political transition specifies that the provisions for transitional justice and national reconciliation would be addressed through a broadly inclusive national dialogue process. As the Council knows, that dialogue concluded a few days ago with positive results that need to be nurtured and supported to complete the transition and promote peace in Yemen.

Let me be clear: we are fully aware that reconciliation cannot substitute for justice, an essential element of ending conflict. However, the reverse also holds true. For example, the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda cannot substitute for national reconciliation. to put it another way, seeking truth and accountability for the past is essential. But they are not by themselves a plan to heal a broken State. That work has to keep happening in the present and in the future.

The United Nations does not have a monopoly on reconciliation efforts. For very good reason, one often cites South Africa as an example of an extremely effective national reconciliation that can serve as a model for others. There are a number of organizations, including the United Nations, that are increasingly taking a more systematic approach to reconciliation issues, in recognition that the physical end of fighting, welcome as that is, does not end the conflict.

While the United Nations approach to enabling permanent peace is under constant review, I will share with the Council four areas that I believe deserve special attention.

First, peace agreements themselves should, where possible and appropriate, provide agreed overall principles and mechanisms through which reconciliation can be pursued, tailored to the specific situation of each conflict.

Secondly, the timing of elections and constitutional review processes need to be considered carefully. If they come too early, they can legitimize war profiteers and thus entrench wartime narratives and fiefdoms. With premature elections, opportunistic populist leaders can cultivate grievances to win office, with risks to long-term peace and stability.

Thirdly, reconciliation has to come from inside and cannot be externally imposed. However, outsiders — Member States, the United Nations and regional organizations — can encourage and enable such national processes to take place sooner rather than later. At the same time, the international community and the societies concerned need to give reconciliation the necessary time. The trust that has been shattered overnight tends to take years to rebuild.

Fourthly, bearing in mind that national processes differ significantly, there nevertheless appears to be a benefit in considering common strands and establishing a repository of comparative knowledge and expertise on reconciliation that can be put at the disposal of Member States, United Nations Special Envoys and others.

I would like to conclude by raising some questions. Can the international community, more specifically the members of the Security Council and the United Nations, provide incentives for a reconciliation that is nationally owned and led? When is the right moment for the process to start, and how do we get right the timing right of elections and, more broadly, of transitional processes? When prevention has failed and ethnic cleansing has taken place, how do we reconcile our aspirations for rebuilding shared societies with the realities of division in the country or region concerned?

Some may ask whether the United Nations in general or the Security Council more specifically should help promote national reconciliation. I would hope that the example of the Syrian catastrophe demonstrates how unresolved internal conflicts can pose grave risks to international peace and security. Moreover, as a Member State-based Organization, the United Nations itself is stronger when Member States are at peace internally as well as with each other.

I thank Jordan for having made us consider some of the most critical aspects that tend to undermine permanent peace. I hope that today's debate will trigger more in-depth thinking on how to ensure more traction to our approaches to peace and security, especially when addressing internal conflicts.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Jordan.

(*spoke in English*)

This open debate on the theme "War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace" falls on the first month of a year in which the international community will commemorate and reflect on the start of the First World War, a century ago —the defining moment of the twentieth century. The debate today, however, is not about the First World War. It is about the principal lesson of the Security Council's experience, drawn from 69 years of practice in ending war. The principal lesson is this: stopping the killing is easier than ending the conflict, and ending the conflict is considerably easier than ending it permanently.

Ten years ago, under the Chilean presidency, a significant debate was held here on the theme "Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of the United Nations" (see S/PV.4903), which resulted in an important presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/2). The debate shed light for the first time in such a setting on the crucial value of truth commissions and judicial accountability to national reconciliation, building on an earlier rule-of-law debate sponsored by the United Kingdom in September 2003 (see S/PV.4833). Most important of all, by focusing on how a community or an affected State recovers from the commission of serious crimes, the debate emphasized the need for the United Nations to build durability into conflict resolution.

Sadly, 10 years on, the Council still finds it difficult not to address not just accountability effectively but also the broader objective of ending conflicts permanently, both non-international and international ones. What the Council has never discussed as a separate subject is the problem of divergent historical narratives, often affected by ethnic or nationalistic distortions, and how they may create conflict as well as impede post-conflict national and international reconciliation. We therefore invite the members of the Security Council and the United Nations membership to consider more closely the three sequenced objectives of conflict resolution, namely, to end the fighting, to end the conflict and to end the conflict permanently.

To end the killing, the methods first devised by the United Nations in the period 1948 to 1961, most notably by Dag Hammarskjöld, Ralph Bunche and Lester Pearson beginning in 1956, remain with us still: ceasefire through mediation, which leads to the separation of forces, the removal of heavy weapons from the line of separation and the monitoring of the ceasefire or truce through joint commissions, joint patrolling and so on. That, the United Nations has shown itself to be capable of performing. To end the conflict, the Security Council, beginning in 1961, expanded the development of peacekeeping with the adoption of resolutions 161 (1961) and 169 (1961), at a time when a ceasefire in the Congo was not so much mediated, as was the case earlier in the Sinai, but fought for in a country in the throes of a conflict. The political spaces created by the United Nations Operation in the Congo in pacifying parts of the Congo, through active counter-insurgency operations, as well through the protection of civilians, were then built on, both figuratively and literally: roads were paved and buildings went up along with new State institutions.

United Nations peacebuilding as we know it now found its first real expression, therefore, in the Congo from 1961 to 1964. Indeed, much of what we do now was done then. There again, the United Nations has developed some expertise. What must be conceded, however, is that much of the work then was physical and, as was common in Western Europe at the time, there was little attempt to address the deeper psychological issues at work before or after the conflict. "Rebuild, train, develop the economy", said the operating manual, and the rest — the trauma, the deep grievances, the emotional pain, the burning anger — they were best left to time and the fading of memory.

Unfortunately, human memory has never been that accommodating and meek. Unless settled by a genuine agreement, built on some deep soul-searching, divergent memories can often lie in wait, like dry gunpowder, for a long time, passed down in many communities from parents to children, ready for a charismatic opportunist to come and stir them abruptly and menacingly, to violent effect.

For that reason, instances of fragile peace, even superficial peace, have remained persistently on the agenda of the Security Council, notwithstanding the importance attached to the holding of elections and power-sharing agreements and so on, because, for the most part, the work of the Council has not dug deep enough into why many of these sorts of conflicts occurred in the first place. And why is that? We are so sensitive to the use and misuse of historical accounts — because so many and varied are the number of disputed historical narratives — with the result that we, the membership, and the United Nations generally have not wanted to play with such a figurative bomb. If we lift the lid off human civilization, even just slightly, and look inside, rather than seeing supporting beams of magnanimity and compassion, we fear we might see only the thrashing, tight, circular currents of enmity and bitterness. Better to have dialogue without history, we have thought collectively, and besides, it will look like reconciliation, which is good enough. So we speak in many meetings of the Security Council of the need for dialogue and reconciliation, with reference to a particular agenda item or other, without in most cases ever knowing what we mean by it. That, too, is dangerous.

To end a conflict permanently, particularly ethnic conflicts or conflicts sprung from extreme forms of nationalism or ideology, the Security Council must grapple with the psychological components of war. It did begin to recognize the importance of memory when it supported the truth commissions in El Salvador, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, among others, but that was done more in the context of piecemeal strategies and was often based on a desire to attain justice and was not aimed at the permanent banishment of conflict altogether. If it had been the latter, the practice would have been mainstreamed into all of the work of the Council.

But even in the pursuit of justice, the unveiling of the truth in return for amnesty, common to many truth and reconciliation commissions, was not certain to reveal genuine remorse — that fundamental and needed companion of truth — because a quid pro quo in the context of an amnesty was required to draw out the confession in the first place. Truth and reconciliation commissions have on occasion needed, therefore, historical commissions to supplement their work.

Also suggestive of the Council's current unwillingness to recognize how necessary a revealed truth is to a deeper form of conflict resolution — notwithstanding its previous creation of commissions of inquiry, as well as the ad hoc, special and hybrid tribunals — has been its hesitating treatment of the International Criminal Court, which, as the only permanent international criminal court, remains the best hope for establishing court-based records of fact for the future.

Ultimately, of course, when ethnic wars or wars sprung from extreme nationalisms or ideologies are reverse-engineered back to their points of origin, what do we find? Standing alone, or sometimes together with other contributing factors, such as geography, climate, scarcity and underdevelopment, is a lie, usually one relating to a historical account, one that is sometimes even fantastic in its audacity; a lie that produces only more lies over time.

If that is the case, we must then accept that it is only when the truth is recovered or a good approximation of it is revealed that a permanent peace can ever be obtained. Truth in that context does not mean a declaration repeated so often that it is seen as true, but the stubborn resilience of a fact, maintained by a broad supporting structure of corroborating evidence, against which narrow and unfounded historical interpretations can make no dent and would have little to no credibility. Of course, where the evidence is correspondingly weaker, the interpretations grow more numerous, and debate should be welcomed.

Once the truth has indeed been established, it then requires acceptance by all sides and, hardest of all, a concession, namely, that each side, rather than point fingers at the conduct of others, should reckon publicly with its own actions. Only that can create a real foundation for a shared narrative, followed by genuine reconciliation and a permanent peace.

What can the Council do? As suggested in our concept note (S/2014/30, annex), distributed to the membership, the Council can begin by mandating the creation of a historical advisory service to assist countries in preserving what will one day be their official memory — the reference point from which the truth can emerge to relieve memory of its tension. By doing so at the earliest stages of a peacekeeping operation, the Council can help lay the foundation needed for a country or countries to set up historical commissions, if they are willing.

Ultimately, the Jordanian delegation believes that the United Nations as an Organization should have a sizeable historical advisory service, in addition to a legal advisory service, which would not only help its Member States to set up commissions and support judicial systems, but also assist them in resolving the many divergent narratives, both between States as well as within them. We have long had, after all, judicial mechanisms for the resolution of border or boundary disputes. What we need now is a historical mechanism to help us file down the sharpest differences in historical interpretation — "border disputes of the collective consciousness", so to speak — with the aim of inspiring genuine reckoning. Extreme nationalism and sectarianism in particular must be handled that way, if we are ever to rid ourselves of their pernicious effects. All of that is, of course, not easy — far from it.

To reckon with one's own individual conduct, whenever that conduct is distinctly shameful to others, is one of the most difficult undertakings for any human being. The more shame the conduct generates, the more difficult the reckoning. We know that because, for the vast majority of humans who commit the worst of crimes, even when confronted with clearest evidence of the truth and their guilt and when there is no amnesty from prosecution offered, they find it next to impossible to freely admit their culpability or reckon with what they have done. That is the story, the very history, of the criminal prosecution of those most guilty of committing the gravest offenses ever since the Nuremberg Tribunal. Indeed, so rare is it — notwithstanding the thousands of trials that have taken place around the world, national and international — for a person known to be guilty of war crimes, indeed found guilty beyond any doubt by a properly constituted court of law, to admit guilt, to reckon with their past; such cases, when they happen, become a cause for widespread attention.

If that is the case in respect of individuals, what then of a wider community, a tribe, a nation or a State, which needs, for its own sake and for the sake of others, to begin such a reckoning? The challenge, we admit, is indeed breathtaking, but if we do not take it up we will remain for the next 69 years caught somewhere in the space between ending conflicts and ending them permanently. Cement alone, along with training, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, elections, power sharing, foreign direct investment, peace treaties and forced amnesia will not be enough — really, it will never be enough. In most cases, the absence of the truth, acceptance and, most important, the creation of a shared historical narrative will puncture time and again our collective endeavour to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That is the truth.

The obstacle before us may well appear too massive for it to be scaled by the Security Council or by the Organization. But it is worth remembering the observations of a once-practiced climber, Dag Hammarskjöld: "Never judge the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was." My delegation invites, with the sincerest humility, the members of the Security Council to feel for their harnesses and begin roping up.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

I now resume my functions as the President of the Security Council.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to organize today's open debate, which comes at a timely moment, at the dawn of the year in which we commemorate the outbreak of the First World War. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing. I also endorse the statement that Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting will make on behalf of the European Union.

When in the aftermath of conflict guns fall silent, it does not mean that peace has been restored. The end of physical violence or even the conclusion of a peace agreement does not erase in a simple stroke the memory of pain and suffering that has been experienced. The question we ask ourselves is, what do we do with this history of conflict? Expressed in another way, how can we demobilize not only combatants but also minds?

Following a conflict, the memory of the atrocities experienced exercises a constraint on the process of rebuilding a society. There is a risk that the memory could be manipulated to serve a logic of opposition. In contrast, there are also examples where revisiting the past has gone hand in hand with efforts to bring people together. That is the case of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century.

European integration is certainly one of the best examples of reconciliation. Countries that had made war for generations, which were responsible for two world wars, worked together to build a common economic area that has became a political union. Today, the European Union is a sui generis model, where disputes between States are regulated exclusively by law.

European integration seems to provide us with useful lessons for today's open debate. The first of those lessons is that neither historical fatalism nor determinism exists, that people who once saw in the Other an age-old enemy have since chosen the path of cooperation and reconciliation, which proves that the course of history is not set once and for all and that political will, used advisedly, remains an extraordinary engine of progress.

The second lesson, which stems from the first, concerns the way the past is interpreted. While the wounds of the Second World War were still open, Europeans rejected calls for revenge and stigmatization. Although at no time was it a question of forgetting what happened or of creating forced amnesia, today, when they look at their history, Europeans do so in the light of the cooperation that they have enjoyed for more than 60 years.

A third lesson deals with the pragmatism that guided the building of Europe, which began by specific achievements that created first a de facto solidarity, to quote Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of Europe. The first of those concrete achievements was the pooling of coal and steel production in 1951 by six countries, including my country, Luxembourg.

Despite the weight of the past, those six countries chose to look forward towards a common future. That approach was probably motivated as well by economic interests, but it began a process of interdependence that fostered reconciliation. The European model of reconciliation is certainly the product of a historical context that is unique to it. But it gives us a formula that is still valid, as can been seen in the ongoing process of the expansion of the European Union.

Let me turn now to the proposal contained in the stimulating concept paper that was submitted to establish the terms of our debate (S/2014/30, annex). It is suggested that, at the end of a conflict, the Security Council could consider assigning a team of historical consultants the task of assisting the authorities of the affected country or countries to recover or protect the documents necessary to establishing a shared interpretation of the history of the conflict.

That suggestion seems quite relevant to some of the crisis situations that the Council is currently dealing with, for example, the Central African Republic. Knowing that discussions are under way for the possible establishment of a United Nations mission to help the Central African authorities to restore State institutions and the rule of law, dispatching a team of historical consultants could be considered in that framework. The work of that team could also be useful to the international commission of inquiry that, under resolution 2127 (2013), the Secretary-General is requested to rapidly establish in order to, inter alia, investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and abuses of human rights in Central African Republic.

Collecting sources and documents could also prove to be valuable to commence proceedings in national and international criminal courts. We are firmly convinced that the fight against impunity is an integral part of transitional justice and that it is essential to post-conflict peacebuilding. Prosecuting those responsible for the most serious crimes under international law will help to prevent such crimes from being committed again in the future.

We would therefore call for such a team to provide a voice for those without voices, namely, victims, and collect testimony from the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and minorities. In so doing, we will avoid the pitfall of an official uniform narrative of the past that would be out of kilter with the conflict in fact experienced by the people. For post-conflict societies to reconcile themselves with their past, light — all the light — must be shed on events. It is in that way that hope for the future is born.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): We thank Jordan for its boldness in convening today's debate on a topic that is challenging, indeed breathtaking, as you have said, Mr. President, for all Member States.

Conflict prevention is why the United Nations exists, but 69 years after the San Francisco Conference, we are still struggling every day "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We witness the daily devastation in Syria, in South Sudan, in the Central African Republic and elsewhere, and the objective of peace seems as distant as ever.

In bringing us to today's debate, Mr. President, you have asked how our understanding of history can help prevent, rather than feed, further conflict, and how the Council itself can help to foster that understanding. Those are crucial questions for the Council as we work to prevent conflict between States and conflict within States.

To prevent conflict, we obviously must first understand what triggers and drives it, we must be able to recognize the warning signs, and we must recall the particular vulnerability of countries that have already experienced conflict. Between 1945 and 2009, more than half of all countries that suffered from civil war relapsed into conflict after its apparent end. Too often, history appears to be destiny.

National mechanisms are usually in the best position to establish what led to conflict and what happened during it. Truth and reconciliation commissions can provide an authoritative account of events that led to or occurred during conflict, and so serve as a crucial bulwark against those who might seek to use and abuse history in order to foment further conflict. The Security Council should provide strong support to those mechanisms, as it did in resolution 2100 (2013) in relation to Mali.

Other parts of the United Nations system, including the Department of Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, should similarly support and encourage truth and reconciliation processes. Accountability processes play an important role in helping to uncover the truth. Justice that is perceived to be legitimate can help a society move past the pain of its past by holding perpetrators to account and giving victims a voice. Criminal courts, whether national or international, can, through their findings, confer legitimacy on otherwise contestable facts, making it more difficult for societies to deny past wrongs.

There must be accountability for perpetrators of serious crimes, regardless of affiliation. Victors' justice is short-lived and ultimately destructive. One of the formative achievements of the United Nations has been the spread of universal rights as an accepted norm, the idea that we all have obligations regardless of our relative power over others. That is something that the Council must always continue to emphasize.

The Security Council should also make full use of the tools at its disposal, inherently imperfect though they are. Commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions established by the Council under Article 34 of the Charter have proven to be useful mechanisms. The Council's recent decision in adopting resolution 2127 (2013) to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in the Central African Republic is an essential part of addressing that conflict.

Of course, other United Nations organs can also play a role. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, authorized by the Human Rights Council, has played a persuasive role in establishing the terrible facts of that conflict.

Regional organizations can also play a role. The African Union's recent decision to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate events surrounding the current conflict in South Sudan is an example. In our own region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is working with the United Nations to document lessons learned through ASEAN's good offices, mediation and facilitation roles and is sharing experiences on the effective conduct of peace processes and negotiations. All of those tools can assist societies to understand events that led to and occurred during a conflict. Inclusive and transparent processes can help to ensure that different perspectives and grievances are heard and acknowledged, and so build a picture of the broad history of the conflict. Incorporating women's voices in those processes is fundamental. Nurturing open and receptive education is essential.

But we must be realistic about the prospects for ultimately arriving at a shared history. Often no single history of a conflict or single understanding of events will be achievable, or necessarily even be desirable. Differing interpretations of events are inevitable, but the facts about those events should be inescapable. We must make every effort to establish those facts and to record and document testimony. Then we should be able to ensure that the victors alone do not dictate the history. The United Nations has an instrumental role in that, one that can often be decisive. It is a role that we should embrace seriously in our work.

It is not enough simply to advocate reconciliation and shared historical understanding. Practical efforts must also be made to ensure that differences cannot be exploited to spark further conflict. Central to that endeavour is ensuring that a post-conflict society is able to effectively mediate differences and address grievances. That is where genuine, long-term peacebuilding comes in, with its emphasis on the rule of law, observance of human rights, access to effective judicial or other institutions and participatory democratic governance. The result will, hopefully, be institutional legitimacy and social cohesion. Ultimately, we seek to build inclusive societies where differences, whether ethnic, racial, religious, political or communal, are accommodated and State protection is extended to all individuals, and where recourse to violence and reversion to conflict is not only unacceptable, but unthinkable. Only then will countries that have been devastated by conflict be able to transcend their own histories.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the initiative by Jordan to hold this open debate, and I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

In humankind's long history over the past several thousand years, wars and conflicts have brought about devastation and claimed countless lives. They have caused the extinction of many civilizations and prevented humankind's progress and development. The prevention of war and the pursuit of lasting peace and development have been the common aspiration of all. The two world wars that took place over the short span of 30 years in the twentieth century wreaked unprecedented havoc on the peoples of the world. They also left us many fundamental and important lessons.

First, lasing peace calls for a new security concept characterized by confidence, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. Faced with complicated and diverse security threats and challenges, we must change the traditional security concepts, respect and take into account the legitimate security concerns of all countries and advocate a new security concept for all based on cooperation. All countries, large or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, should become defenders and promoters of peace. We must seek to resolve differences through dialogue, enhance confidence through cooperation and achieve general security through mutual benefits and win-win results.

Secondly, lasting peace calls for the resolution of disputes by peaceful means. In this age of globalization, where the interests of States are intertwined and our fates are interdependent, peace has become our shared aspiration, and war will never enjoy any support. History has proved repeatedly that the resolution of disputes through dialogue, consultations and negotiation is the only effective way to achieve lasting peace. The international community should step up efforts to promote the peaceful resolution of differences and disputes among the parties to conflicts, prevent conflicts, stop conflicts from escalating and nip war in the bud.

Thirdly, lasting peace calls for multilateralism and the strengthening of the collective security machinery, with the Security Council at its core. The United Nations plays an irreplaceable role in international cooperation aimed at safeguarding the world's security. Its role should be enhanced rather than weakened. All States should effectively abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have become the accepted basic norms in international relations. The Security Council should, in accordance with the sacred mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, further enhance its authority and effectiveness, assume greater responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security and play a greater role in the prevention of war and the maintenance of peace.

Fourthly, lasting peace calls for a new concept of development that promotes mutual benefits and win-win results. The efforts by all countries to achieve mutually beneficial cooperation and common development constitute important bases for maintaining international peace and security. Against the backdrop of globalization, countries cannot be separated from each other, and together they form a community of common destiny. In seeking their own development, countries should try to accommodate the legitimate concerns of others and seek more common denominators in their interests, with a view to bringing about optimal development that benefits all countries. We should seek, through our common development, to eradicate the breeding grounds for conflicts and attack the threats to global security at their source, so as to lay a solid foundation for durable peace and security and a harmonious world in which all enjoy prosperity.

It is nearly 70 years since the end of the Second World War. The reflection on that unprecedented tragedy is far from over. Past experience can serve as teacher. We are here today to draw lessons from history so that we will cherish peace even more. Only by facing up to history squarely and through deep reflection on and the memory of those lessons can we truly heal the wounds of war and achieve lasting peace. Attempts to disregard the truth of history or even to change history, to deny or conceal crimes of aggression and to reverse the verdict on the war of aggression not only destabilize regional peace but also pose serious challenges to the cause of peace of humanity. The international community should be highly vigilant in that regard.

In defiance of the strong opposition of the international community and neighbouring States, the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Abe, recently visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours many Class A and other war criminals, in order to pay tribute to those who launched the war of aggression and were soaked in the blood of the people of the countries that Japan invaded. The Yasukuni Shrine is a particular tool and symbol of Japanese military aggression. The fact that to this very day the war criminals convicted by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East are still regarded as deities, the distortion of the history of aggression, the promotion of an erroneous perspective of history in an attempt to reverse the verdict on the war of aggression and responsibility for it and Mr. Abe's tribute to those Fascist war criminals are nothing less than a challenge to the victory against Fascism and to the post-war international order established on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

Such acts would naturally be strongly opposed and condemned by the Chinese people and Government, as well as the international community. The Charter of the United Nations clearly stipulates that members of the United Nations should be peace-loving countries that accept the provisions of the Charter. Mr. Abe is trying to reverse the verdict on the Second World War and to defend war criminals. That will never be accepted by people who have a conscience or by countries that uphold justice. Whether the Japanese leaders choose to abide by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations by accepting the victory in the war against Facism and the post-war international order or to support the war criminals is a fundamental question of principle. The Japanese leaders should recognize and reflect on the history of aggression and redress their mistakes through actions so as to regain the trust of the international community, including Japan's neighbouring States.

No one can defy the current trend of history. Any act that refuses to reflect on the history of aggression, negates the victory of the people of the world against Fascism and challenges the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations will be in vain and will be rejected by history.

China is willing to work with all peace-loving countries in the world in order to uphold humanity's conscience, the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international justice and to drive the world towards common security and lasting peace.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank the Jordanian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely debate. I also thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for his thought-provoking statement.

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be made later today by the Head of the European Union delegation.

Humanity's lessons from the horrors of war have often found expression in a combination of normative and institutional acts. Thus, like the United Nations itself, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights arose directly from the experience of the Second World War. Originating from the bloody memories of the Battle of Solferino, international humanitarian law continued to evolve in response to the new realities of war in the twentieth century, leading to the reinforcement in 1977 of the provisions on, inter alia, the illegality of indiscriminate attacks against civilians and the expansion of its application to non-international conflicts.

The more recent concepts of the protection of civilians, key to the work of the Council, human security and the responsibility to protect emerged as a response to the changing nature of modern conflict. The moral outrage in the face of mass atrocities highlighted the urgency of tackling impunity for crimes against humanity, genocide and major war crimes, leading to the creation of international and mixed criminal tribunals and the International Criminal Court, a body whose purpose is to make accountability truly universal. Commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions established themselves as an important tool for registering mass violations of human rights and crimes against humanity. Today, they are a useful instrument in the work of the Council.

The world has also seen more than 30 truth and reconciliation commissions, established to research, record and testify to abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law. Recommendations by those commissions command high legitimacy and are essential for ending impunity and preventing further abuses. Furthermore, such commissions are instrumental in the healing process of communities affected by conflict as sharing personal stories of pain and loss can help the victims to recover their dignity and give them courage, while remembering to move on with their lives.

In our part of the world, joint commissions of historians to seek common understanding of contentious issues have been set up. The knowledge of truth and historic memory is essential as knowledge and the memory of the brutalities are powerful vehicles for pushing humanity towards seeking better and more effective ways to protect human lives and human dignity and create durable peace.

In order to have an impact, however, truth alone is not sufficient. It must be supported by political will and be firmly anchored in an enabling legal and institutional framework of respect for human rights, the rule of law, accountability and democratic governance. A fundamental lesson that requires enhanced application is that of prevention. Unresolved grievances, exclusion and marginalization, extremist ideologies and unchecked personal ambitions, territorial claims and ethnic tensions — 100 years since the beginning of the First World War, the causes of conflict remain hauntingly similar.

Knowing that, it is essential that we improve significantly our ability to anticipate the warning signs of a looming conflict and act accordingly. The world is not short of inspiring examples of preventive action. An outstanding case of preventive thinking in Europe after the end of the Second World War was the Franco-German reconciliation, binding two former enemies in a solid framework of interdependence. Also in Europe, what started with the emergence of the European Coal and Steel Community is today the 28-strong European Union, whose membership continues to be sought and to inspire democratic transformations among aspirant States.

Regional organizations are well placed to develop preventive capacities. Lithuania's experience as Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe a couple of years ago and our working together with our European Union partners to defuse emerging crises strengthen our belief in the importance of confidence-building, the use of good offices and mediation for conflict prevention. The efforts of subregional organizations in Africa and elsewhere aimed at conflict prevention offer a promising alternative for the future.

A key element of prevention is education. Through education, we can promote truth and keep alive the memory of the countless victims of wars, genocides, ethnic cleansings, religious extremism and totalitarian ideologies. The stories of the victims are essential in promoting the shared values of humanity and a better understanding of our common history. We should use those stories for the sake of building a lasting peace so that the much promised "never again" can finally indeed become "never again".

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank the Kingdom of Jordan for proposing "War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace" as a topic for Security Council debate. In so doing, it has raised profound questions about the role of accountability, the role of the United Nations and each of our individual and collective responsibilities in preventing and ending deadly conflict.

We know that the opposite of war is not peace; the opposite of war is not war. And we have to remain alert to the chasm between a mere suspension of hostilities and the creation of lasting reconciliation based on the acceptance of a shared historical narrative. The former is the most urgent and achievable goal when conflicts are raging and lives are being lost, but the later is necessary if we are to improve the likelihood that fighting does not resume. To move from "not war" to peace, communities need to be able to know who did what, how and why. To move from blaming Christians or Muslims, Hutu or Tutsi, Shia or Sunni, Dinka or

Nuer, communities must begin holding not whole races or religions responsible for their pain, but individuals.

Mr. President, you and I first met two decades ago when you served as a political officer in the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and I was a journalist reporting on the conflict. We both observed the virulent role the past can play in poisoning relationships between people who have much in common and, at least before the fighting begins, no personal cause for anger. The ironic expressions that made the rounds back then spoke to the role of history in fuelling violence. "Nothing learned, nothing forgotten" was one saying. "We in the Balkans have so much history we do not need a future" was another.

Today, we see countless examples of old unaddressed grievances boiling over. In Burma, a country that has taken historic strides towards democracy, Muslims continue to feel the effects of a repugnant and deep prejudice that is prevalent across society. This has left the Rohingya without citizenship, vulnerable and marginalized. Other Muslim populations are finding themselves increasingly isolated from communities with which they have lived for decades. Those emotions have proven deadly. Over the past weeks, we have all seen the alarming reports that Muslims have been targeted and possibly dozens killed in Maungdaw township in Rakhine state. Last year we saw similar atrocities in Meiktila.

Burma has made positive progress in opening up its political system over the last two or three years, but that kind of violence poses grave risks and must be dealt with before it claims more lives. To do so, there must be a credible and independent investigation into what happened in Maungdaw and there must be justice for the victims. Otherwise the cycle of violence, grievance, retributive violence, new grievance, more retribution and so forth will take root, with each round getting harder to stop than the one before.

Examples of disagreements about the rights and wrongs of the past exist on every continent and may have their origins as far back as antiquity or as near to hand as last night. All too often, we are bedevilled by divergent views of particular acts. One side sees aggression where the other sees self-defence. One side's justice is defined by its rival as vengeance. One side's patriotic gesture is interpreted by its neighbours as disrespect. More broadly, differences of perspective come into play whenever we contemplate the history of the great religions, the rise and fall of colonialism, the two World Wars or any variation of the question, asked in a multitude of contexts, "Who did what to whom?"

And all too often, even when diplomats know the answers, it seems downright undiplomatic to articulate them. We tend to describe outbreaks of violence in the passive voice — "violence erupted" or "intercommunal violence emerged". We use those phrases because we are afraid to blame. Accountability is easy in the abstract. In practice, it requires a willingness to assign and in turn accept responsibility.

It helps no one when victims are forced to blame their suffering on an entire religious, ethnic or political faction. Crimes against humanity are committed by individuals, including — no, especially — by those who give the order and then stand back while underlings shed innocent blood. That is why historical records matter. They provide the evidence that can be used to establish personal accountability, and unlike allegations of collective guilt, individual accountability can heal wounds without opening new ones. By developing and preserving historical records, we can help ensure that when disagreements arise, now or in the future, the stakeholders can at least be informed by a common set of facts.

My Government agrees that the recovery and protection of such records and the creation of national archives where none exist are useful steps and should be encouraged and, where appropriate, assisted by the United Nations. More generally, when seeking to bring opposing sides together, United Nations representatives should be encouraged to ask hard questions about why conflict began and how it has been prosecuted. United Nations missions, like national policies, should aim to get at root causes, not just symptoms. The urgency of that could not be more evident.

We need only look at the Security Council's current docket. The Central African Republic has been disintegrating along largely religious lines, despite the fact that the country has not traditionally been prone to sectarian violence. In South Sudan, even with a cessation-of-hostilities agreement now in place, attacks continue and each ethnic group involved is assigning blame to the other, with personal rivalries only compounding the finger-pointing.

In Syria, the Government's brutality has extended without limit to torture, executions, indiscriminate bombings, the shredding of medical neutrality, the use of starvation as a weapon of war and gas attacks against civilians. Terrorist groups have inflicted additional pain on a people that, when they assembled to show support for democracy, wanted no more than basic dignity for themselves and for their children.

That is why the key challenge going forward is to create a transitional body with enough capability and credibility to restore a sense of mutual trust. But we need only put ourselves in the shoes of those who have suffered such brutality — who have lost livelihoods, homes, friends, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, husbands and wives — to know how hard it will be to trust again. And without accountability, the trust deficit will only grow larger.

The duelling narratives that exist today will continue to fester and polarize, providing oxygen for authoritarians and militants. In each of those cases — the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Syria — the international community has wisely launched commissions of inquiry to document events, gather eye witness testimony and investigate competing claims. And it is no accident that over the past several years the United States has supported and the United Nations system has produced more commissions of inquiry, panels of experts and related fact-finding bodies than at almost any other time in United Nations history. We have done so not because there is more war — though sadly there is far too much war — but because we now all share a better understanding of the role that fact-finding and, ultimately, accountability plays in preventing rampant violence from becoming endless, cyclical and uncontrollable violence.

Those who posit attention between justice and peace need look no further than history. The evidence is overwhelming that peace in the absence of justice rarely endures. That is not to suggest that there is a single model for achieving that goal — there are many — but all begin with a search for truth. That was the case with the war crimes trials following Second World War, and it has been the case more recently in, among other places, South Africa, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, El Salvador and Sierra Leone.

Stability and peace begin with our willingness to do what is necessary to deter those who would employ violence to abuse the rights of others. As the fates of Charles Taylor and Ratko Mladić now illustrate, the narratives that are most likely to help douse the embers of conflict are those that put the facts on the public record and the worst offenders behind bars.

One hundred years after shots were fired in Sarajevo, it is entirely appropriate that the Security Council examine the question of how we might reverse engineer war in order to understand better its causes and, in so doing, what is necessary to achieve a lasting and enduring peace.

In the past, we on the Council have shown ourselves capable of learning. We have learned to be more comprehensive in our approach to crisis situations. We have become more alert to the threat of genocide and mass atrocities and more aware of religious and cultural factors. We are becoming more proactive in including women in efforts to preserve security and make peace. We have started giving more robust peacekeeping mandates to Blue Helmets, and the peacekeepers themselves are becoming more creative in their use of technology and new tactics. All of this learning is helpful. None of it is a panacea.

The same may be said of ensuring that an accurate and objective record is kept of what happens in our time, so that the dangers of bias are minimized and lies are exposed before they become myths.

A wise man once urged us to pray for God's protection against "those who believe that they are the sole possessors of truth". King Hussein knew that peace is built on reality and that reality will never mesh perfectly with any one set of perceptions about the present, the future or the past. It is the Council's task to integrate that understanding into the daily business of preventing conflict and nurturing reconciliation. No job could be more difficult, and none more vital.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for having chosen this imaginative and important theme for today's debate.

Applying our conflict-prevention responsibilities effectively requires us to have the deepest possible understanding of conflict. Too often the Council's attention is focused on the proximate causes and immediate triggers of conflict. This debate, Sir, and your thoughtful concept note (S/2014/30, annex) encourage us to look deeper and more searchingly into the underlying causes and historical roots of conflict.

Historical understanding is a key component of productive diplomacy. Cicero famously said that not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child. Understanding history deepens our understanding of the contemporary challenges confronting the Security Council. It helps us to determine better the right policy responses, to draw conclusions from what has happened in the past, to avoid repeating past errors, or, to paraphrase Einstein's definition of insanity, to do the same things and expect different results.

As diplomats and representatives of our Goverments, we have important responsibilities towards history. Our national histories are important parts of our identities as nation States. All countries rightly take pride in their achievements as nations, in the sacrifices made by their armed forces and in the distinguished individuals who have shaped their culture and history, who may appear on banknotes and as statues in their squares.

Treated responsibly, these histories can bind us together. But we also have a responsibility to address our history in an objective and unprejudiced way that does justice to the truth and that, by acknowledging the mistakes of the past, contributes to a secure and stable future. That is important not just because historical truth has a value in its own right, but also because addressing the past honestly provides a basis for shared understanding, healing divisions, reconciliation and moving forward.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa provides a powerful example of the value of confronting a painful period of a country's past in a transparent and fearless manner. In the United Kingdom, the Saville Inquiry, completed in 2010, provided a full picture of the tragic events of 30 January 1972 in Northern Ireland, known as "Bloody Sunday". In presenting the results of that inquiry to Parliament, and in apologizing on behalf of the Government and the country, Prime Minister David Cameron voiced a wider truth about historical responsibility. He said, "Openness and frankness about the past, however painful, do not make us weaker; they make us stronger".

Just as a responsible approach to history can contribute to peace and security, so, sadly, the opposite is true. The conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s provide an object lesson in the consequences of political leaders abusing history by harnessing a skewed historical narrative to fuel extreme nationalist ideologies and promote hatred and tension between different ethnic or religious communities. Or, as Sir Winston Churchill put it, the Balkans produce more history than they can consume.

History should never be treated as a form of intellectual ammunition to incite conduct or prolong conflict. Historical disputes should not be perpetuated or used for political ends. We should never forget or dismiss the past, but we should be ready to move on from it.

We have another important responsibility: to draw appropriate lessons from the past. The United Nations itself exemplifies this. A profound understanding of the consequences of two World Wars and the inadequacies of the inter-war League of Nations informed the structure and founding principles of the United Nations. An understanding of the lessons of the past helped to give rise to an enduring and resilient multilateral Organization which has made an incalculable contribution to international peace and security.

But the United Nations, too, needs to look self-critically at its history and draw the necessary lessons. This year will see the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. Next year will see the twentieth anniversary of the genocide carried out in Srebrenica. Both are tragic stains on the reputation of the United Nations and the Security Council. That is why it is right that we now seek to embed policies such as the protection of civilians — the responsibility to protect — and welcome new approaches such as the "rights up front" into our work.

This year also marks 100 years since the start of the First World War, the defining moment of the twentieth century. That was the first war on a truly global scale, unleashing casualties in numbers never seen before. What is striking about 1914 from today's perspective is the absence of any kind of multilateral framework that was able to check the descent into war by the major European Powers. A situation had arisen in which, at a point of international tension and dispute, the default was towards conflict rather than dialogue, negotiation and mediation. The generals stepped forward, and the diplomats stepped back.

One hundred years later, that is a lesson that we must never forget. This body, the Security Council, has a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We must discharge that responsibility in its fullest sense, bridging our differences to arrive at a common purpose, drawing on the deepest possible historical understanding, heeding early warnings, actively anticipating conflict and using all the tools at the Council's disposal to deliver effective conflict prevention.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the delegation of Jordan for having convened this open debate and for having drafted the concept note (S/2014/30, annex). I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

We will approach this statement not from the point of view of crisis management but, rather, from that of the preventive function that this principal organ of the United Nations is called upon to play pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations.

My country is convinced that the best approach in terms of protecting the civilian population and for an efficient use of resources is the exercise of an active preventive diplomacy, understood in the terms expressed in the unique document entitled "An agenda for peace". That means using the instruments that the Security Council has at its disposal to take

> "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur" (*S/24111, para. 20*),

without forgetting that, in all cases, conflict prevention is a crucial responsibility of Member States.

A prevention strategy includes a commitment to the strengthening of the rule of law, respect for international law and for existing treaties, and the recourse to peaceful means for the settlement of disputes, with democratic institutions and practices that respect human rights, all of which, in the final analysis, would make it possible to establish a climate conducive to achieving greater levels of development and social justice.

In that context, we underscore that it would be useful to strengthen early warning systems and the role that regional and subregional organizations can play in conflict prevention, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Through their geographical and cultural proximity, as well as their better understanding of the causes of the conflicts and the sensitivities of the various parties, such organizations can make a valuable contribution to such endeavours. Developing effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organization is therefore crucial.

Furthermore, the role of civil society organizations in identifying early signs of violence and the capacity of such organizations to provide warning of dangerous situations to national and international authorities are crucial. We emphasize in particular the contribution and role that women must play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. We stress the importance of their equal participation in such processes and the importance of seeking to ensure and increase their representation in all levels of decision-making, in keeping with provision of resolution 1325 (2000).

The sort of preventive diplomacy proposed would avoid the fracturing of societies and the recurrence of conflict. Prevention strategies must include reconciliation processes in societies emerging from conflict. That is an issue at the heart of the Jordanian initiative in holding this debate. It was precisely "Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of the United Nations" that my country chose as a theme during its presidency of the Security Council in January 2004, under which the presidential statement cited by the Permanent Representative of Jordan (S/PRST/2004/2) was adopted.

We view reconciliation as both a goal — something to be achieved — and a process — a way of achieving that goal. We see it, therefore, as playing a preventive role, whereby, recognizing divisions, we can anticipate and avoid potential conflicts. On the other hand, with regard to existing conflicts, it would allow for the rapprochement of opposing parties. The process of reconciliation is far-reaching, deep, specific and differentiated and must necessarily be inclusive. Only in that manner can we address the root causes of the divisions and prejudices that exist. It also is a process that will be different for each society and can not be imposed from the outside, and it is one in which the role of the United Nations should be one of assistance, facilitation and support.

Reconciliation is not and should not, be a substitute for justice or accountability. Indeed, in order to be effective, reconciliation must be based on truth, justice and reparation. Recent United Nations instruments, such as the Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity (E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1) of the Economic and Social Council or, even more recently, resolution 68/165 of the General Assembly, entitled "Right to the truth", recognize the importance of respecting and upholding those rights in order to end impunity and promote and protect human rights.

In that context, we recall the reference to transitional justice made by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, which is to be understood not as a special kind of justice, but as a strategy precisely for realizing the right to justice, truth, reparation and non-recurrence.

The President of the Republic of Chile recently recalled before the General Assembly at its present session that, last September, our country "marked the fortieth anniversary of the most far-reaching and lasting upheaval ever to affect our democracy" and "the twenty-fifth anniversary of the start of the peaceful recovery of our democracy" (*A/68/PV.5, p. 25*). On that occasion, President Piñera Echeñique enumerated a number of lessons learned. The first is that no conflict, whether external or internal, ever justifies violence as a means of political action or the abuse of human rights. Secondly, democracy, peace and civic friendship are much more fragile values than we tend to believe, meaning we should never take them for granted. Thirdly, there is a very close relationship between the quality of democracy, economic progress and social justice, as they nourish one another and are mutually reinforcing. And fourthly, we must learn from our experiences so as to avoid repeating mistakes.

To establish the truth about what happened in my country, investigatory bodies and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were established, with the task of investigating history and determining what had occurred, making recommendations, and suggesting modalities for reparations and for prevention. The legal instrument that established the Commission recognized that

> "... only on the basis of the truth will it be possible to meet the basic demands of justice and create the necessary conditions for achieving genuine national reconciliation ... Only by knowing the truth can the dignity of victims be restored in the public consciousness and bereaved families be allowed the possibility of honouring them properly ..."

Of equal importance is the need to recognize their suffering, so that such suffering never recurs.

Allow me, Mr. President, to refer to the 2012 report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, who stated that, since 2000, prosecutions have been initiated or completed with regard to 76 per cent of victims of disappearances and executions in Chile (A/67/368). My country continues working today, in its process of reconciliation, and we stand ready to share our experiences with those members of the international community who deem them useful.

I conclude by calling on the Security Council to support the following specific actions: strengthen preventive diplomacy initiatives and early warning systems, so that they can send appropriate alarm signals and react in a timely and effective way; promote the strengthening of mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes and systems of human rights protection, at the international, regional and subregional levels; strengthen the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, so that the assistance that they provide to Governments in post-conflict countries incorporates truth and reconciliation as a main axis of their work; and strengthen the mandates of peacekeeping operations elements that support post-conflict political processes.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): At the beginning of 2014, history takes us back to the beautiful summer of 1914 when, in just a few days, the world toppled into the horror of a seemingly never-ending war. Out of the 39 million people in France, 1.4 million would lose their lives in that war, without counting the 800,000 handicapped and 4 million injured, or forgetting the 40 thousand square kilometres of our national territory that were devastated.

On 11 November 1918, observers noted that joy was more contained in Paris than in London, despite Alsace-Lorraine having been restored to France. Indeed, the pride of victory and the relief brought by the end of fighting were mixed with the sorrow caused by the carnage that had spared not even a single French family. Between the wars, France was a country of veiled widows, war-orphans and walking wounded. The monuments to the dead in even the smallest of our villages still attest to that.

It is no surprise, then, that France later hesitated to plunge into another slaughter. Before travelling to Munich in 1938, the French President gathered his thoughts in the cemetery of Verdun, where he had fought. The cemetery remains overwhelming in a landscape that is still gloomy and moon-like almost 100 years later. "Never again", intone the endless rows of graves. In May-June 1940, at a time when the United Kingdom and France stood proudly against Nazism, another invasion killed 90,000 French soldiers in six weeks. Misfortune and occupation followed, with half a million dead.

And yet, my country, exhausted by its trials and tribulations and invaded three times in 70 years, decided not to prepare yet another round of the never-ending cycle of confrontation but to place reconciliation before revenge. Charles de Gaulle, wounded and taken prisoner in the First World War, and saviour of the nation in the Second, attended mass with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in Rheims, where our kings were crowned in the cathedral whose destruction in 1914 symbolized the barbarity of war. It was at Verdun, the most bloody battle in history, where over 700,000 French and German soldiers died, that President Mitterand and Chancellor Kohl held hands before the monument to the dead.

Germany and France have achieved what no one could have hoped for even believed back in 1918 or 1945. They reconciled. The two peoples no longer consider themselves to be hereditary enemies and no longer fear or hate one another. It was a long road for both sides; the memories were deep-rooted and bitter. Prejudice was strong. It took the genius of the few, the will and courage of the many, imagination and time. It took imagination to create common institutions in which the young people of both countries learned to know each other and their parents learned to cooperate, and time for new generations that were not damaged by war to emerge. Today, the Germans and the French have written common history books in which, together, they spell out a shared story despite a history that so often brought them to blows. History is not destiny. The Germans and the French have proved that.

But there is history as tragedy that envelops peoples, and there is the more modest history narrated by men since the days of Herodotus and Thucydides. That history reflects the passions, prejudice and ignorance of its writers and readers, and, with the advent of compulsory education in the nineteenth century, became an instrument for forging national identities that defined themselves exclusively by opposition to one's neighbours. It is about this history that the Jordanian presidency has asked us to reflect.

No diplomat would deny that this history is omnipresent in our work. With every conflict, we look to history to understand it, as if only the past can explain human fury — as if each of us has inherited hatreds and fears, the new incarnations of original sins, that make us future Cains and Abels from our very birth. If that were indeed the case, then that history would need to be exorcised. Like the French and Germany teachers, we would need to excise the history books of the hatred and fear they contain. Like the young people of France and Germany, we would need to visit one another on vacation.

What should we make of this inevitability of history that hangs eternally above us? Let us consider France in the nineteenth century. Russia, the symbol of Eastern despotism and oppressor of Poland, in 1891 became, at the drop of a hat, the closest of our allies and friends. Similarly, in 1890 the hereditary enemy of France was not Germany but Great Britain, with which we were repeatedly on the verge of war in those years. If we allied ourselves with Russia, it was probably more in opposition to Great Britain than to Germany. In 1904, the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale buried, in a matter of mere months, a hatred and rivalry that observers of the time would have deemed to be irreconcilable.

Similar examples are manifold, and not only in France. So-called historical conflicts are not perforce eternal. After all, Iran was long Israel's ally. In other words, it is not history that causes or fuels conflicts. It is conflicts that fashion history in their own image. Two countries that clash or come together do so for reasons of interest, and not because of some sort of eternal destiny. They need to look to the past to provide justification for their hostility or friendship, and they find it without great trouble because history is very accommodating.

History is accommodating because its origins are dubious. It sees itself as a science, and has increasingly become so, but it is written by men. Men have a nationality; they have religion and passions. They are forced to base their versions of history on documents that may be too few or too many, to formulate hypotheses and to make choices. History is human and therefore fallible. Thank God, we are no longer in an age when French Hellenists chose Athens and Germans chose Macedonia as reflections of their views of themselves and of their countries. Thank God, today's historians are distancing themselves from such biases.

But the average citizen is less subtle, the journalist less scrupulous and the politician less knowledgeable than the historian. It is all too easy for them to find justification in the folly of their ancestors for today's follies. They will always find it easy to do so. Their neighbours will be, successively, the best of allies or the worst of enemies, since the past justifies everything. "History can be raped so long as the resulting children are good-looking", Otto von Bismarck is supposed to have said, and he knew what he was talking about. Man continues to rape history, but sires nothing but monsters in his own image. The origin of conflict is to be found not in history but in men. History is but an instrument; to forget that is to confuse the weapon with the assassin.

What are we to do with this history? Shall we imitate the Germans and French and extirpate our prejudices without mercy? Is that possible, or even desirable? Certainly, the question may seem paradoxical, but it remains true that the Franco-German experience is too specific in nature to serve as an example to others. On the one hand, one of the two partners accepted its primary responsibility as part of a brave exercise in soul-searching that far transcended the context of its relations with its neighbours; on the other, it required a common threat to compel them to set aside their suicidal quarrels.

If we set aside such exceptional conditions, we will see that in seeking to neutralize history we come up against the instinctive refusal of the average citizen to believe that the world's trials and tribulations reflect anything but a faceless inevitability. Man needs a name for his misfortunes. Man needs to feel that he is on the side of justice and reason. He needs a meaning for the sacrifices he and his fellows make. History is therefore necessary, indeed indispensable to him because of its certainties, its explanations and above all its condemnations. We will never deprive people of that need; worse yet, in seeking to do so we may revive disputes that had almost been forgotten and make such fading quarrels topical once more as we come up against people's refusal to renounce their own convictions. Indeed, a history without guilty parties would force them to admit either to their own share of responsibility for the tragedy, or to their own powerlessness to prevent it. In either case, they will feel that it strips them of their dignity.

No, there is only one solution, and it is not reason. It is time. "Time solves all", said the poet. Yes, time flows slowly, but even in Europe, with its long memory and many follies, we have forgotten Joan of Arc and Waterloo, and are currently forgetting the Kaiser. We will forget our other misfortunes.

I should like, therefore, to conclude with a paradox. France — a country that in the past century endured a relentlessly tragic history that threatened to overwhelm it and yet was able to transcend the resulting hatred and fear — advises that history be left to its proper place in the debates of historians, so long as they are free to say what they wish and have free access to the archives they need. States should not meddle in history. That is neither their mission nor their remit.

However, it is not forbidden to demand that they show a minimum of respect for the feelings of others and for restraint in self-expression that is mindful of the passions that threaten to flare up at any time. In a word, they must exercise the prudence necessary to ensure that history does not seek vengeance for what humankind has inflicted upon it. In hearing some of the statements made here today and considering various approaches, such a call does not seem useless. Franco-German reconciliation was certainly a unique event, but it could serve as inspiration for resolving other disputes.

I cannot conclude without turning again to the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War — a disaster that resulted in the countless ills of the twentieth century. No one wanted the war, yet no one knew how to avoid it. Let that impotence reminds us that we still live on the brink. There may be no longer be any archdukes, but we still have human folly. That is what we must be wary of — what we must exorcise — knowing that it lurks always, whether at home or abroad. Peace is never a given, as the cemeteries of Verdun serve to remind us.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by thanking you and the Jordanian presidency, Sir, for organizing today's open debate. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his comprehensive briefing.

With this year marking the centennial of the First World War, the theme of today's debate is both timely and relevant. This debate enables us to reflect anew on the scourge of past conflicts and lessons learned. We would also like to seek ways to prevent conflicts and consolidate peace for future generations. While several factors can be cited as triggers for the outbreak of the First World War, we cannot deny that parochial nationalism and mistrust among States led to the war. There was an obvious lack of understanding and tolerance among the parties to the conflict. On this centennial anniversary, we believe that genuine recognition of and remorse over past wrongdoings is the first step towards preventing another war and securing durable peace. George Santayana, the American philosopher and poet, famously said that those who did not remember the past were condemned to repeat it. The fact that the world witnessed the horrors of the Second World War, only two decades after the first, illustrates humankind's failure to learn from the lessons of history.

Unfortunately, in our region of North-East Asia, tensions are rising more than ever before due to the distrust among States. In large part, that stems from the fact that the Japanese leadership has a distorted view of what happened during the time of imperialism. In Europe, for example, in striking contrast to Asia, Germany's steadfast efforts after the Second World War to come to terms with its past served as the basis for genuine reconciliation with other countries, paving the way towards European integration. Japan, however, has not been able to properly address or break away from its militarist past. That is the underlying reason behind many of the recurring conflicts over historical issues in the region.

Recently, many Japanese leaders have continued to show an attitude of historical revisionism by paying tribute at the Yasukuni shrine, where its past history of aggression is glorified, by making irresponsible remarks that the definition of aggression has yet to be established and by passing on distorted historical views to its next generation through revised school textbooks. Japanese political leaders' worshipping at the Yasukuni shrine, where wartime leaders convicted as Class A war criminals during the Second World War are enshrined, is a direct challenge to the foundation on which Japan rejoined the international community in the post-war world. Such remarks and actions undermine future-oriented relations and peacebuilding among nations in the region. They also run counter to the objectives and spirit of the United Nations, which reflect the aspirations of peoples for peace after experiencing the most horrendous war in history.

Recently, the Japanese Government emphasized its contribution to global peace with the policy of a proactive contribution to peace. However, one cannot but wonder how Japan can play such a role, when it is actually creating more troubles with countries in the region. If Japan seriously wishes to contribute to regional and global peace, it should refrain from provoking its neighbours with its denial of history.

A matter that is a serious concern not only for East Asian countries but for the entire international community itself is the so-called comfort women issue. In the United Nations, the issue has been discussed in the context of women's rights, the exploitation of women in conflicts, war crimes and the prevention of torture, among others. Indeed, Sunday, 26 January was a very sad day for the Korean people. A woman passed away who had been taken by force by the Japanese Imperial Army to suffer as an enforced sex slave. That leaves the total number of surviving comfort women at 55. The comfort women issue, which is at the core of the pending problems between Korea and Japan, is also an important universal women's rights issue.

The United Nations reports of the 1990s submitted by Ms. Coomaraswamy and Ms. McDougall (E/CN.4/1996/56, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13) stated that the comfort women issue was one of sexual slavery in armed conflicts, requiring the acceptance of legal responsibility, compensation and the punishment of perpetrators. In 2007, the Congress of the United States and the Parliament of the European Union passed resolutions, respectively, calling on the Japanese Government to accept historical or legal responsibility, apologize and pay compensation. As such, enforced sexual slavery represents a breach of the conscience of humankind.

The Japanese Government has yet to take responsibility for the issue. At the General Assembly last year, the Japanese delegation mentioned Japan's contributions to the victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts. But it said nothing about the comfort women. If their definition of the victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts does not include comfort women, is that a case of double standards or a denial of the past? The Japanese Government should urgently pay heed to the calls of the victims of its crimes and the international community. It should act by instilling a spirit of peace and reconciliation in its younger generation by correctly teaching the lessons of history.

Having said all of that, I still believe that we should look to the future. History should move forward. We need to move on. But in order to do so, if for no other reason than moving on, we should face history and learn from its lessons.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): "War, its lessons and the search for permanent peace" is the theme chosen by the Jordanian delegation for today's open debate, raising the bar to an unprecedentedly high level. This theme has boggled the minds of thinkers for centuries, and it remains relevant today. There are solid starting points for this discussion as part of the existing system of historic parameters.

We are currently commemorating two events that are essential for drawing the lessons of war and searching for lasting peace.

Seventy years ago, we witnessed the lifting of the siege of Leningrad, a city that never fell to the fascist invaders — at the cost of the lives of hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants. On 27 January, the day of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp by the Red Army, we honour the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, a heinous Nazi crime.

History's verdict, reaffirmed by the Nuremberg Tribunal, is as resolute as the victory of the Soviet Union-led anti-Hitlerite coalition and as unconditional as the capitulation of Nazi Germany: Nazi organizations, practice and ideology are criminal. It is that understanding that transformed the victors into the United Nations and inspired the Charter of the Organization.

That truth does not allow for compromise. The notion that the manifestations of Nazism do not need to be fought against today because a healthy society will itself reject those ideas disregards not only the malignant nature of the phenomenon but also today's alarming reality. Why is it that, even in some countries with deeply rooted, long-lasting democratic traditions, the misanthropic book *Mein Kampf* remains an Internet bestseller? Why are neo-Nazi and far-right parties and organizations getting stronger, and why are racially motivated attacks and killings a regular occurrence? Why is it that a former Waffen-SS legionnaire, whose services were rewarded by the Nazis with a Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, was buried with State honours? Why are attempts made, through crude revisions of history, to depict Nazi accomplices as heroes of national liberation movements? Why do the relevant international institutions fail to react in a principled manner to outrageous violent acts committed by fascist-spirited thugs who spout direct incitement to murder? Why does so-called political correctness prevent some from supporting the annual General Assembly resolution condemning new forms of racism and the glorification of Nazism, while some others switch off their conscience altogether and vote against it? All those questions require honest answers. Otherwise, we will all face an uncertain future, one which would be a far cry from the ideas of permanent peace and widely declared democratic principles.

An irreplaceable foundation for pursuing durable peace today can be found in international law and its cornerstone, the Charter of the United Nations. Respect for the sovereignty and unique identity of nations and for the prerogatives of the Security Council as the body with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security are principles that are essential for avoiding dangerous upheavals with disastrous consequences. That conclusion has been confirmed at a high cost, as proven by the history of the past decade.

The Security Council, bearing its high responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, should act in the interests of the entire international community, and not in the interests of its individual Members, who might be guided by their own geopolitical, economic or ideological motives.

Decisions by the Security Council must be fully complied with in accordance with their letter and spirit.

Whenever crises break out, including domestic ones in various countries, it is imperative, first and foremost, to facilitate constructive dialogue among the parties concerned.

In addition, one must not forget that the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations has not been abrogated by anybody. The imposition of recipes, especially those with such strong drugs as regime change, leads only to destabilization accompanied by the deterioration of conflicts and the spread of terrorist threats.

The goal of reaching permanent peace will remain a dream unless the habit of sabre-rattling is overcome and a strong consensus is hammered out in favour of seeking political and diplomatic solutions to even the most acute problems.

Despite the great complexity of today's international relations, we are witnessing encouraging progress in some areas. I am talking about the first agreement reached between the P-5 plus one and Iran regarding the latter's nuclear programme, the decision to destroy the Syrian chemical arsenal and the convening — at the initiative of the Russian Federation and the United States — of a conference to settle the devastating conflict in Syria. Those undertakings must be successfully and fully implemented.

Such efforts would mark an important step towards a permanent peace, which will be secured only through more hard work by the international community, building on the existing potential for cooperation.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on such an important topic of concern to the entire international community. I would also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

Every day, when we turn on our televisions or radios, we see or hear how conflicts ravage a great many countries, many of them to be found in Africa or in the Middle East. The consequences of those wars and conflicts are felt at many levels. In addition to the loss of human life and the destruction of institutions and economic and social infrastructure, we also have seen the impact on the cohesion of societies in conflict and the repercussions on the existence of States affected by those crises.

The conflicts of today have devastating effects on women and children in the form of killings, injuries, imprisonment, detainment against their will by armed groups and their exploitation for various purposes, including as victims of sexual violence and human trafficking. Conflicts tear families apart, destroy social fabrics and deprive States of their resources for a very long time.

What can the United Nations do in terms of the prevention of conflicts, faced with their widespread occurrence throughout the planet? What can rich countries do to assist poor countries, which often serve as the theatres for all types of conflicts, to better manage conflicts and restore lasting peace, so beneficial for all? Some conflicts can be predicted, others cannot. The international community will have to devote itself to preventive diplomacy. In regions where States are weak, racked by various ethnic quarrels and lacking the necessary resources to meet the basic needs of their people, there is, of course, a risk of conflict, especially when not all the various elements of the population are associated with or involved in managing the affairs of State.

A few years ago, Côte d'Ivoire was considered to be among the most stable of countries, yet war prevailed. In the Central African Republic all the communities were reportedly living happily side by side, but religious differences emerged and surprised everybody. Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan are further examples, of which there are many throughout the continent.

What is taking place in Syria and other States in the Middle East is also not grounds for optimism.

A great many countries of the South have not been spared by war because the conditions for lasting peace are not there. Poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, socioeconomic fragility, injustice and marginalization are factors that lead to conflict. Wars in today's world do not produce winners and losers. All those who fight are losers, because war causes devastation and leaves a great many serious problems, in particular material as well as psychological problems. Preventive diplomacy is very promising insofar as it is a cost-effective way to avoid conflict. To restore peace, some demand justice — in other words, a peace based on who is right — whereas others give pride of place to reconciliation.

There is a need to merge both of those approaches, that is, justice for serious violations and reconciliation for all others. Reconciliation, which has been held up as an example for all in South Africa, shows that a country can play the role of a peacemaker. The international community must make greater efforts to propagate a culture of peace in the countries of the South by raising the awareness of the people regarding the problems of war and their collective and individual responsibility for grave violations of human rights under international humanitarian law, as well as for war crimes.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank you and your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate and for the excellent concept note (S/2014/30, annex) provided to guide our discussion. I also thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Feltman for sharing his thoughts on this topic.

The first sentence in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations highlights the need to save successive generations from the scourge of war. Yet that remains a daunting task. While the number of wars between States has been reduced significantly since the end of the Second World War, the number of wars within States have increased considerably. The quest for a permanent peace was the primary reason for the establishment of the United Nations. The costs of war in human and material terms leave us with unsavoury legacies. The search for a permanent peace should therefore lead us to question why past approaches have not been successful. It is no longer remains an argument of nations arming themselves to defend sovereignty or territorial integrity, but a conscious act of preparation for war. We remain tied to the dictum that if you want peace you must prepare for war.

To its credit, the United Nations has acted to prevent outbreaks of conflict, but it can do only so much in that respect. States' interests may diverge from the principles of the United Nations, and sometimes they come into open conflict, leading inevitably to violations of the Charter and an outbreak of one form of conflict or another. Showing its resilience and undaunted interest in keeping the peace and on separating combatants, the United Nations has often been called upon to provide troops to play those roles, which it has admirably done during the past six decades. In fulfilling its mandate to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council has played a pivotal role in the prevention of wars.

As the representatives of our countries, we must unequivocally state our commitment to peace and abjuration of war as a means of settling disputes and disagreements, especially between and within States. In abjuring war, we should not merely wish for a state of absence of conflict, but we should strive to establish a state of just peace in the world, where oppression no longer tramples the dignity of peoples or denies them their rights and freedoms. Where such rights are denied and where impunity is allowed to prevail, there the seeds of conflicts and wars are planted and nurtured by hatred, extremism and intolerance. In proclaiming the need for a just peace, we must also demand an end to all wars as extensions of politics and means of settling human affairs.

Wars are manifestations of human folly, and therefore cannot be defended by either reason or wisdom. As rational beings conscious of right and wrong, we must know that war is wrong and peace — a just peace — is right. We must aspire to end wars and usher in the reign of peace across the globe.

Upholding the Charter of the United Nations faithfully would mean, first of all, renouncing once and for all the prerogative to take recourse in war and accepting the spirit of peaceful settlement of all disputes, including by mediation, arbitration and juridical means. Secondly, it means exerting all the powers of the Member States towards ensuring that threats to international peace and security are not allowed to remain unchallenged. In that scenario, the responsibility to protect becomes the responsibility to prevent.

There are feasible alternatives to a world characterized by conflicts. It is up to us to consciously make the choices that would prevent war. We need, therefore, to revisit the philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of our foreign policies. We need to ensure that foreign policies are not designed to be instruments of war and conflict. Indeed, we need to rethink beyond narrow, so-called national interests within and between States. Inclusion rather than exclusion and compassion rather than oppression should be the basis of our relations. That can be achieved only when we emphasize what unites us rather than what divides us.

Despite what may appear as daunting challenges to the elimination of the scourge of war, there is no alternative but to sustain our efforts in the search for a permanent peace. We therefore firmly believe that the use of preventive diplomacy tools presents the most viable option for the attainment of that objective. Across the street from United Nations Headquarters there is monument erected to promote the cause of peace. On it are inscribed the words "to beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks". It is a reminder of the need for us to end wars and embrace peace.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's open debate. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for the concept paper (S/2014/30, annex).

The proposal made by Jordan for today's debate leads to a discussion on how we can put into practice the purposes and principles of the United Nations, the Organization that was established as a result of the tragic and traumatic experience of the Second World War, its main objective being the promotion of peace through the prohibition of the use of armed force. As the concept paper states, today there are different types of conflict and situations that, without fitting into the traditional concept of war, still present threats and risks to international peace and security. We are living in an era that is almost completely dominated by internal conflicts, an era where we have seen the commission of serious human rights violations, including genocide.

We say that we live in a world without wars, if by that we mean the brutal configurations of wars between nations or groups of countries of the twentieth century, such as those we saw in the First and Second World Wars. However, we do not live in a world without conflict or confrontations or fights over interests.

We believe that the attainment of a world without wars in the sense of traditional wars is due to the creation of military technology of terrible destructive power. Indeed, contemporary weapons are capable of destroying humankind many times over, so war between great Powers has become nonsensical and improbable, although not impossible.

However, we can also describe our era as being one that is intensely destructive and marked by the proliferation of indiscriminate violence that strikes, terrorizes and kills innocent men and women, young people, children, contradicting the ethnical principle that no one should be used for others' purposes. Why do I say that? It is clear that today the interests of power centres with greater economic and military might in the globalized world and the objectives of circumstantially based and flexible alliances of power between different Powers to control or condition the fate of certain countries or regions, generally those of developing countries, are alien to the peoples and communities that need, desire and crave a life of dignity and a world of peace. Proof can be seen in the exponential increase in the number of civilian victims in conflicts — from 20 per cent during the First World War to 50 per cent in the Second World War to 80 or 90 per cent in contemporary armed conflicts, destroying thereby the basic principle of personal responsibility and the exclusion of responsibility for external factors that are part of modern life.

It is important to point out that there are new scenarios, new actors and different dimensions where new forms of violence appear in relation to powerful but age-old economic and military structures of domination and discipline or new threats that come from the actions of non-State actors. We are talking about acts of terrorism, the globalization of organized crime, savage and predatory struggles for natural resources, and various forms of authoritarian fundamentalism. But we are also talking about ethical and political violence that generate and compound hunger, exclusion, discrimination and inequality in order to protect the privileges of powerful or affluent minorities in the light of majorities that are devastated by poverty and uncertainty. The actions and decisions of the globalized financial power centres, for example, show that today war can be done through other means.

Before the Charter of the United Nations, there were humanitarian norms on war, such as The Hague Convention of 1907, but only with the United Nations did the principle of peace become a supreme standard of international law and the relations between nations. However, we know that there is a great gap between what is said in the Charter and reality. We know that we have contributed significantly in the Organization to the objective of containing the deepening and expansion of conflicts. But we also know that we have not been extremely coherent and effective in preventing them.

It is crucial that the rule of law and the effective exercise in equal conditions of all peoples of the right to sustainable development and the harmonizing of the goals of justice and peace through the strengthening of national capabilities but also through international mechanisms that fight against impunity, such as the International Criminal Court, be recognized as some of the most important challenges we have to take on.

To conclude, I believe that it is crucial that we put into practice regional and universal early-warning mechanisms to prevent atrocities, an aspect in which regional and national scope becomes essential to cooperation and dialogue in order for the rule of law to be strengthened. I would like to highlight the Latin American and Caribbean region's commitment to observing and strengthening the rule of law, in particular through the adoption of democratic instruments.

We face a number of challenges — economic, social, environmental, political, ethical and cultural in nature. One of them entails leaving behind the vestiges of old imperialist vices, which emerge as colonial anachronisms that persist in the twenty-first century itself. To do so, we must redouble the Organization's efforts for the eradication of colonialism, which was one of the United Nations founding goals, taking into account the particularities of each situation.

My country believes it appropriate to highlight the need to resolve conflicts through dialogue in order to contribute to their peaceful resolution. Among the means for peaceful resolution at the disposal of the Organization and its States Members is the role of the good offices that the Organization can entrust to the Secretary-General. Good offices missions or any other means for the peaceful resolution of conflicts will achieve their desired result if parties to the conflict fulfil their responsibilities in good faith in those processes.

Ensuring peace was the clear purpose of the Organization's founders, but to ensure that it is lasting, not only is the Security Council required to act, but also all United Nations organs and the different Member States as well, to build true multilateralism in full equality, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this innovative and important open debate on the theme "War, its lessons and the search for permanent peace". Let me also thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his invaluable contributions to our discussion.

At the outset, allow me to affirm that this is the right place to have this kind of debate. We all know that the United Nations — especially its Security Council — came into existence to rectify the inefficiencies of the League of Nations, which failed to stop the Second World War. The United Nations was established in response to the magnitude of the threat to peace and security and was another international collective determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. While there has been no other world war in the nearly 69 years of the United Nations existence, there have been hundreds of inter-State and intra-State conflicts, particularly on the African continent.

It is unfortunate that, like its predecessor, the United Nations has failed to prevent conflicts. It is at least very true for the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda — a genocide all of us know was preventable. The Security Council chose not to heed the call of its people on the ground, and the troop-contributing countries opted to pull out their peacekeepers and their expatriates, in some cases leaving defenceless people who had sought refuge in their camps in the hands of the Interahamwe militias. As a result, more than 1 million people were mercilessly killed in only 100 days. As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, we are constantly reminded of the United Nations peacekeepers standing by when our families were slaughtered.

While we successfully pulled ourselves up from the lowest point, the main question is whether the international community, including the United Nations, has learned something that will motivate it to play a more vigorous role in the future. Although we have seen some progress in the past years, including through the doctrine of the responsibility to protect, the conflicts in Darfur, Libya, Syria or the Central African Republic remind us that much more needs to be done today.

You referred in your statement, Mr. President, to the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC). I think that the role of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a perfect illustration of its failure to reach a permanent peace in that country. As you said, Sir, the United Nations was in the Congo right after its independence, through ONUC. But unfortunately, 54 years later, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is still confronted with deep conflict, not only in the east but also in other regions of the country. In endeavouring to repair the failure the United Nations had there, let us try to avoid shortcuts by looking for scapegoats for the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, on the contrary, go deeper, to the root causes of the problem. We should do so if we really mean it, if we really want to help the Congolese people. This could be very important for our future.

For Rwandans, the memory of the past 20 years has shaped our understanding and allowed us to forge a new nation that is successful in restoring trust in State institutions, engaging Rwandans in the reconstruction of sustainable reconciliation, building a competitive economy, promoting development and restorative justice and overcoming ethnic divisions. We believe that those are the foundations of any preventive efforts at the national level, which in turn may shape regional and international approaches to the search for permanent peace. As the concept paper (S/2014/30, annex) outlined, there is a need to share experiences of meaningful reconciliation and best practices to cement lasting peace.

Rwanda went through a number of processes with a view to aligning our country's needs with our national realities, and adopted homegrown solutions such as the gacaca courts, which is a grass-roots form of restorative justice. For Rwanda, justice and reconciliation in post-conflict societies are inextricably linked. The people of Rwanda came to embrace that homegrown system as a reconciliatory justice mechanism. The gacaca courts, which closed their doors in June 2012, handled about 2 million cases in 10 years. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), while establishing useful jurisprudence in the punishment of genocide and other war crimes, has handled only 75 cases in 17 years, at a very high cost. If I may put this in context, as numerous as the causes of conflict are, it is important for communities and stakeholders to be more specific in the prescription of solutions and take into account the specificities of not only the conflict but also the community to be restored. We are in a position today to share this unique experience with other post-conflict societies as a means of fostering reconciliation and preventing further conflict.

Another milestone on the Rwandan path towards solid unity and reconciliation was the adoption of the so-called Ndi Umunyarwanda programme, which, literally translated, means "I am a Rwandan", as part of our healing process. Rwandans understood that if we really needed to build sustainable development, we must build on a strong foundation, free of any mistrust. The Ndi Umunyarwanda is therefore an initiative aimed at looking beyond what divided Rwandans to achieve a nation built on trust, with open dialogue, truth-telling, repentance, forgiveness and healing, to strengthen the culture of accountability, to put an end to impunity and to ensure reconciliation and unity.

The concept paper that you shared with us, Mr. President, highlights the role of history and archives in the aftermath of a conflict and how the United Nations can help in changing historical realities into a shared understanding of the past. That brings me to the question of the ICTR archives. We believe that those archives should be transferred to Rwanda because they constitute an integral part of our history. They are vital to the preservation of the memory of the genocide and will play a critical role in educating future generations to guard against genocide denial and revisionism, thereby contributing to the permanent peace in Rwanda.

Given the subject matter under discussion today, I would not end my statement without highlighting the role of regional and subregional organizations. Due to the evolving nature of modern conflicts and warfare, States and the wider international community have been forging new ways to respond to conflict. The United Nations has recognized the growing role of national and regional actors in conflict prevention. That is so relevant that Governments, regional organizations and the international community are now shifting their focus to addressing the underlying causes of conflict, while increasing the capacity to streamline and implement their efforts to intervene when civilians are endangered.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the call that we made last April during Rwanda's presidency of the Council (see S/PV.6946) for the Security Council to do more to prevent conflicts instead of managing them. As we come to grips with our responsibilities to protect people from the genocidal Governments, it is essential not only to strengthen early warning systems but also to deploy important tools, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, preventive diplomacy and other good offices. Equally important is the need to invest in the development of strong institutions at the national level, including legislative and judicial bodies, which establish the foundations of good governance based on the rule of law, democratic principles and values and accountability. All those elements contribute to building societies that are resilient to violence and wars.

Before ending, I would like to thank the Ambassador of France, our friend Gérard.

(*spoke in French*)

His was a great statement. I hope that we can draw lessons from it and expand the experience of France to a number of other countries.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to inform all members that we will continue this open debate during the lunch period as there are a large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): New Zealand very much appreciates the initiative in proposing this debate. So often Council members have to respond to immediate crises. There are too few opportunities to step back and view the wider picture and even rarer is the chance to look at the historical factors that shape the present security environment. Yet we all know that those who ignore history tend to repeat it.

It is timely that this debate occurs in the year when we will reflect on the commencement not only of the First World War but also of the genocide in Rwanda. In 1993, perhaps if Council members had reflected more on the history of Rwanda, they might have been better prepared to recognize and deal with the underlying tensions and so prevent the crisis and the tragic collective failure to respond that followed in 1994.

However, learning from history should not be limited to absorbing lessons from past decades. There is much to learn also from recent history. Lessons learned from the delayed action over the crisis in Mali should have better informed Council action on the situation in the Central African Republic.

Past conflict is tragically an all too common indicator of future conflict. Many thematic debates in the Security Council in recent years have underlined the importance of the Council's role in conflict prevention and peaceful resolution but that thematic narrative is often poorly implemented. The Security Council has developed many tools for Chapter VII action but is much less well adapted for peaceful action under Chapter VI. Adapting the Council's work to that end is vital.

New Zealand urges the Council to employ more flexible working methods so that it can be more nimble in its consideration of situations that present the risk of conflict and more inclusive in terms of participation. Whatever the format, the time needs to be made so that Council members and those that are affected or that can help are better able to assess where threats to international peace and security are emerging and what early response might help.

Addressing the historical roots that lead to conflict is not just a way of quickly identifying a potential problem. It is also critical to devising solutions that will be sustainable. A key element in enduring peace is national reconciliation. It is therefore most welcome that you, Mr. President, have brought reconciliation processes into focus today.

New Zealand recognizes that in the past the Council has frequently affirmed the importance of national reconciliation but all too often that aspect is missing in mandates. We therefore warmly welcome the innovative suggestions made by Jordan and are supportive of the Council developing appropriate mechanisms.

Like all Council tools, such mechanisms must be tailored to national needs and circumstances. In our Pacific region, in recent years, New Zealand and our regional partners helped to provide a secure environment in Solomon Islands to enable the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the causes of conflict there in order to foster national unity. That process recognized the importance of local ownership.

The Council should make more use of reconciliation processes. The Peacebuilding Commission and the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa could play a helpful role by cooperating closely. They could help the Council to understand the particular historical risk factors that point to conflict and to support local development of reconciliation mechanisms to address the factors that underpin tensions and division.

New Zealand looks forward to further follow-up work in understanding what history can contribute to the Council's work both in identifying the risk of conflict and in avoiding it in future.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on convening this open debate and on encouraging reflection on this important matter. Brazil welcomes the concept note (S/2014/30, annex) circulated by your delegation and welcomes the recommendations contained therein. I am also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

Humanity has learned that war means death, destruction, misery and long-term suffering. However, history has demonstrated that laws and moral exhortations alone are not enough to eliminate the scourge of war. The elusiveness of permanent peace should lead us to identify some crucial lessons from the past that should be part of our collective engagement towards fulfilling our role in that most pressing matter.

First and foremost is the imperative of upholding diplomacy, cooperation and multilateralism as the pillars that will negate the inevitability of wars. The multilateral collective security system, and the Council in particular, still represent the best hope for putting the lessons of the past at the service of a future of sustainable peace. To that end, universality and legitimacy must be seen as the greatest strengths of the system. There should be no room for exceptionalismn or self-exemption from the universally applicable rules and commitments. In its quest to demonstrate that it has learned from previous wars, the international community is correct in reminding itself of its failure in preventing genocide in Rwanda and the massacre in Srebrenica. But the record is also tainted by situations such as the use of force without Security Council authorization in Iraq and the decades-long inability to effectively address the challenge of peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

As we look for lessons in the search for a permanent peace, we cannot overemphasize the importance of international law and multilateralism. The United Nations Charter, with its key provisions on the use of force, represents the single most important conquest of the international community in preventing the repetition of two World Wars that stand out as the bloodiest chapters in the history of humankind. The Security Council, as the principal organ responsible for upholding those provisions, remains the central authority in that regard. Its effectiveness requires that it be viewed as legitimate and representative.

In a multipolar world where geopolitical influence is undergoing rapid reconfiguration, the call for reform of the Security Council is one that must be addressed with a sense of urgency if we do not want to risk the erosion of the system, which, in spite of its failings, has limited the damage of conflict and ensured a significant measure of international cooperation for peace.

Another inescapable lesson is that greater priority must be attributed to conflict prevention. If the Council could better anticipate potential threats to peace and security, several wars would have been avoided. I am convinced that the Security Council can do more in that regard. The protection of civilians will be better served inasmuch as brewing crises do not escalate into open conflicts. The most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent armed conflict and, should it arise, display a true commitment to its resolution by peaceful means.

As we revisit the horrors of the First World War 100 years after it broke out, we should keep in mind the fact that the most threatening situations to international peace and security arise from tensions between and among the most heavily armed world Powers. While an examination of the current agenda of the Security Council might lead some to imagine a correlation between poverty and war, the truth is that historically it is the militarily most advanced that have wrought destruction on the widest scale. Today, threats to global peace and security continue to derive from the proliferation and possession of weapons of mass destruction — in particular nuclear weapons — and the notion that the most powerful may selectively place themselves above international law.

In considering the importance of history for reconciliation, the Security Council would be wise to heed the ideas put forward by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights in her latest report (A/68/296). Ms. Shaheed focuses on the issue of the writing and teaching of history. Let me refer to her discussion of the question of historical narratives, in particular the challenge of distinguishing between, on the one hand, the legitimate continuous reinterpretation of the past and, on the other, manipulations of history for narrow political ends. In post-conflict nations, oftentimes cultural narratives stressing adversarial identities become embedded in historical accounts, thereby entrenching enmities among groups that could lead to a future relapse into conflict.

In post-conflict situations, especially when forging the foundations of stable societies, the importance of understanding the other, as opposed to perpetuating adversarial attitudes, cannot be overstated. That is an exercise that will inevitably be required in the peace processes in the Middle East and beyond.

In the same spirit, I wish to recall the appeal for pluralism in the context of building peace by Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen. In examining the question of identity and violence, he touches on a subject particularly relevant to today's debate — the importance of allowing for the coexistence of multiple identities in an individual. Categorization along a single trait or identity, he argues, exacerbates mistrust and generates violence. In Mr. Sen's words,

> "The prospects of peace in the contemporary world may well lie in the recognition of the plurality of our affiliations and in the use of reasoning as common inhabitants of a wide world, rather than making us into inmates rigidly incarcerated in little containers."

Cultural plurality can thus be considered an essential element in preventing the consolidation of hegemonic or parochial ideologies that fuel hatred instead of promoting understanding. At the same time a shared representation of the past — not as a result of imposed interpretations, but as mutually acceptable narratives — can be equally important to break patterns of dissemination of distortions and falsifications placed at the service of prejudice and delegitimization of the other.

It may seem unusual to speak of culture and education in the Security Council, but few authors have promoted a more eloquent picture of where we stand today in the search for peace than the Franco-Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf in his inspired blueprint for setting a course for the twenty-first century, entitled *Disordered World*. As he reminds us,

> "In one way or another, all the people on Earth are in the same storm. Rich or poor, arrogant or downtrodden, occupiers or occupied".

And for that reason, he argues, our scale of values today can be based only on the primacy of culture and education. The ink of the sage is worth more than the blood of the martyr, said the prophet of Islam. In the Talmud, there is a moving idea that the world is supported by the breath of children studying.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this thematic debate, and congratulate you on having carried out your presidency so successfully with so little lead time to prepare yourself. We also thank you for your eloquent statement this morning, and Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his very lucid briefing.

We appreciate the interesting concept paper (S/2014/30, annex) and the very concrete proposal that it contains. It is the basis of my own statement. My reference point is that the invitation that has been extended to us to think about preventing war and maintaining peace constitutes the Security Council's raison d'être — that is, what it does on a daily basis. In that context, what we have before us is a discussion on how effectively the Council is doing its job.

My delegation has just spent two years as a member of this forum and has given considerable thought to how the Council can and should go about the business of maintaining international peace. It is hardly a topic that can be adequately covered in four minutes. However, I will make the following very brief points.

First, in spite of its serious flaws, the Council has been relatively successful over the past two decades in maintaining peace, and, when that has not been the case, it has been relatively successful in containing and managing conflicts. Syria heads the list of the few exceptions to that observation.

Secondly, part of that success is due to a cumulative learning process on the part of Member States, the Secretariat, the community of non-governmental organizations and civil society. When we compare the practice of peacekeeping and peacebuilding today with the practice as it was 10 years ago, we note major innovations tending towards greater effectiveness and a much greater effort to address the root causes of conflict. We are all familiar with the gradual expansion of the Council's thematic agenda, and there is no need to belabour the point, except to stress your point, Mr. President, that it is one thing to achieve peace and another thing to achieve a firm and lasting peace.

Thirdly, having gone through a protracted internal conflict ourselves, we share the concept note's emphasis on a culture of tolerance and reconciliation. However, we must be realistic and recognize that we live in an imperfect world. We should always stress the prevention of conflicts, but, in cases where, despite our best efforts, we fail, we must move quickly to contain them and use all of the increasing means available to us to bring them to a speedy end, at the lowest cost in humanitarian terms.

Fourthly, there are no blue books on how to maintain peace. Circumstances and even personalities, which play a pivotal role, differ in every case. The Security Council must continue to tailor its mandates to each unique situation.

Fifthly, the Security Council can greatly influence events on the ground, but, ultimately, peace can be maintained — or restored — only between the parties in conflict, be it between States or within States. In matters of war and peace, the international community can play critical roles, but it is domestic actors that are the final masters of their destiny. It is also important to acknowledge and to address the increasing number of sectarian and tribal conflicts, especially within States, which obligates us to assess adapting the instruments at the Council's disposal and the means to implement them.

Finally, circumstances change, and trends are not linear. We can never accept that worsening situations, such as those we face today in various African and Middle Eastern States, will inevitably lead to major disasters. Both circumstances and trends can be acted upon by both individuals and institutions. A judicious mix of policies on the part of the Council can prevent conflicts and reverse trends. In fact, Mr. President, that is the whole point of having a proactive Security Council, which has proved its value over and over again during the past 67 years in achieving, in various cases, the lasting peace on a solid basis that is mentioned in your concept note.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): I stand before the Council as a man who has seen and experienced war — as a soldier, as a diplomat and as the father of children who themselves have been sent to war. I speak to the Council today drawing from those experiences and as the son of a man who fled Nazi Germany to escape the annihilation of his people.

Two days ago, the United Nations recognized its International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, commemorating the 6 million Jews, including one and a half million children, who were murdered by the Nazis.

The Holocaust may have reached its barbaric climax in Auschwitz and Treblinka, but signs of the impending catastrophe were evident years earlier. Jews were systematically demonized: robbed of their dignity, then robbed of their possessions, and, finally, robbed of their lives.

In the last century, this pattern of defamation, degradation and bloodshed has been the hallmark of an impending atrocity. Despite the pledges — even in this Chamber — of "never again", we have seen the pattern repeat itself over and over again.

War does not begin with the firing of weapons or the deployment of troops. War begins when the seeds of hatred and intolerance are sown in the hearts of ordinary men and women.

This April will mark 20 years since the Rwandan genocide — a genocide characterized not only by unspeakable brutality, but by the fact that it was entirely preventable. In the months leading up to the genocide, General Roméo Dallaire, commander of the United Nations peacekeeping Mission in Rwanda, warned that Hutu extremists were planning a campaign to exterminate the Tutsis.

He knew what was coming, because the warning signs were evident. The radio waves were filled with ugly messages demonizing and dehumanizing the Tutsis. Vulnerable members of society became targets; children were conscripted and women were assaulted. A list was drawn up detailing the names of people to be killed. General Dallaire tried to warn the world, but his warnings fell on deaf ears.

As photos and stories of the genocide emerged, the world was haunted by the atrocities it failed to prevent and once more pledged "never again." Just a few years later, it ignored the lessons of history, and the cycle of defamation, degradation and bloodshed was repeated in Darfur.

From Cambodia to Bosnia to Somalia, the international community has failed and failed again to prevent the killing of innocent people. Each of us has a role to play in the struggle for human rights and human dignity. We cannot tolerate Governments brutalizing their people. We cannot rest while barrel bombs are falling on Syrian citizens, executions are on the rise in Iran, and sexual violence is rampant in the Central African Republic.

We must break down the wall of silence. We must overcome indifference. We must know what we stand for and then stand up for what we believe in: never indulge racism; never ignore incitement; never be silent when confronted with the warning signs of war.

In schools, mosques and media across the Middle East, people are being taught to hate, vilify and dehumanize Israelis and Jews. Even as we speak, a generation of Palestinian children is being taught that murder is moral, racism is righteous and terror is tolerable. Palestinian Authority media quotes Hitler, describes Jews as less than human and displays maps that erase Israel's existence.

Today we are witnessing State-sanctioned incitement in Iran, where Ayatollah Khamenei corrupts the English language by describing Israel as a "cancerous tumor" and demanding our eradication "from the face of the Earth". This is a regime that has stood in this very institution and threatened Israel with annihilation. To all those who say "that was in the past", I answer that just two months ago, tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Tehran and chanted, "Death to America" and "Death to Israel".

Even in Egypt, after 35 years of peace, the Government has failed to educate against incitement. In 1979, President Sadat stood courageously in the Knesset to forge a historic peace agreement between our two nations. But today, from the corners of Cairo to the archways of Alexandria, hatred is systemic: official media outlets advertise anti-Semitism; movie theatres frame Israel as the enemy; and maps eliminate Israel.

It is not enough to have peace between Governments. We need genuine reconciliation between people. It is Governments' responsibility to educate their citizens towards tolerance, justice and mutual respect.

It is not enough to claim that war is intolerable. It is not enough to pledge "never again". We must heed the warning signs and take action, beginning by uprooting incitement and hatred. The horrors of history are too often met with silence. Many members of this institution called the United Nations have failed to speak out in a united fashion and collectively condemn those who call for the annihilation of other Member States.

From this Chamber, I want warn the people of the world not to close their eyes to the atrocities around them, nor turn away from the animosity that ensues. It is our responsibility to speak out against hatred clearly and unequivocally. Let us equip the next generation with words and not weapons; arm them with ideas and not radical ideologies; teach them tolerance and not terrorism.

War is not inevitable. It is not a force of nature. Nor is it part of human nature. It can be prevented, but only if we stand together to denounce indifference and defend peace.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: Let me first thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for having organized this very important debate.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

In your concept note (S/2014/30, annex), Mr. President, you reminded us of the opening paragraph of the Charter of the United Nations, which expresses the determination of the peoples of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Speaking as a European before the Council in 2014, exactly 100 years after the outbreak of the Great War and 75 years after Adolf Hitler plunged Europe into a second global conflagration, I have to face the fact that both of those World Wars were started in Europe. Just two days ago, the Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in the General Assembly Hall once again reminded us of the very darkest pages of recent European history.

But speaking for the European Union today, I am taking the floor for the very organization that probably represents the most striking case of lessons learned in the history of our war-torn continent. It is true that great Europeans such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Giuseppe Mazzini and Victor Hugo devised strategies for perpetual peace and European unity long before the process of European integration ever started. But it was this very process of European integration that was able to make a real difference after centuries of war and conflict.

When Robert Schuman announced the creation of the Coal and Steel Community in May 1951, he predicted that this pooling of resources would make war between France and Germany "not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible". As the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg already reminded us at the very beginning of this debate, Schuman also insisted that

> "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity".

Those who follow our efforts, be it in Brussels or here in New York, are only too well aware that "making Europe" remains hard work, even more than 60 years after the Schuman declaration. But they also know that, for the European nations joined in that process, those six decades represent the longest shared period of uninterrupted peace throughout their entire history.

Ahead of this debate, Sir, you stressed the importance of reconciliation. We believe that the European experience has demonstrated that reconciliation is possible, even between those who saw each other as hereditary enemies for countless generations. But reconciliation cannot be decreed. Reconciliation among nations requires leadership, but it must grow over time. One of the best practical ways to promote reconciliation is probably to focus on common concrete achievements of the kind that Schuman spoke about.

You, Mr. President, underlined the need to base meaningful reconciliation on shared historical understanding. You have also made a number of interesting practical suggestions in that context and on how to promote such a reconciliation process. We agree with your basic assessment, but we know that efforts in this field represent a considerable challenge, even in our European framework. Nonetheless, some remarkable work has been done in this field, primarily at a bilateral level, between individual Member States, including on the development of common educational material for schools.

Let me add that the first precondition for providing a better historical understanding to people, especially young people, in post-conflict situations is to maintain educational activities during conflict, or at least re-establish them as soon as fighting has ended. If entire generations of children in regions of conflict do not have the chance to go to school, it will be even more difficult to win their hearts and minds, and reconciliation will face even greater challenges. That is one of the main reasons that the European Union is placing so much emphasis on support for education for the hundreds of thousands of children affected by conflict all over the world, most recently in Syria.

Let me underline that the European Union and its member States fully share the view expressed in your concept note, Sir, that durable reconciliation cannot be achieved without individual criminal accountability for those responsible for the most serious crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity and major war crimes. That is another part of our shared European experience. Ensuring that kind of accountability is a specific responsibility of the Security Council. In that context, the Council's continued support for the International Criminal Court is particularly important.

Based on our own experience, we are firmly convinced that regional integration is a concept that can make a major contribution to peace and lasting reconciliation, including beyond the present borders of the European Union. As Council members know, we offer the perspective of membership in the European Union to all the countries of the Western Balkans. We are convinced that European integration also provides them with the best chance to overcome the legacy of history and forge a brighter future under a common European roof.

Also based on our own experience, we are committed to supporting all those who pursue the goal of integration in other parts of the world. Our close and intensive cooperation with the African Union demonstrates that in an especially vivid manner.

The Security Council has repeatedly underlined the important contributions that regional and subregional organizations can make to the maintenance of international peace and security. The European Union and its member States have a longstanding and firm commitment to international peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including through European Union-led military and police missions. It is therefore very fitting that this important debate is taking place just one day after the Council unanimously authorized the deployment of an EU operation in the Central African Republic.

The Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann once wrote that history was a great teacher, but that it did not find any pupils. I believe that our European experience, but also that of the United Nations, the African Union and numerous other regional and subregional organizations across the globe, demonstrates that nations and peoples, as well as the international community as a whole, are able to learn from history. It is a learning process that requires constant encouragement, such as through the meeting that you, Sir, decided to convene today. Thank you once again for this initiative.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for holding this open debate on the maintenance of international peace and security, and more specifically on the theme"War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace". This enables the Security Council to consider in-depth a matter that touches the very heart of the Organization's work and that, despite its complexity and importance, has not yet enjoyed due analysis and understanding.

I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Feltman, for his briefing.

Recognition of the substantive role of the historical narrative in post-conflict national reconciliation and preventive diplomacy reflects a transformation in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is one of the main factors of conflict, and heals wounds in an artificial and irreversible manner. The disputed historical narrative bears the seeds of prospective civil war, lies at the heart of the suffering experienced in many parts of the world, perpetuates war and undermines peace processes.

The historical narrative is one of the most important components of identity. It is an error to believe that it is not affected by ongoing developments. It has a concrete impact on perspectives on present and future events. Whether or not it is correct, the historic proposition is not confined to the past but extends to the present and the future. The failure to establish an environment conducive to finding a shared historical perspective for addressing post-conflict situations can be very serious and may threaten international peace and security.

In that regard, security transcends but does not nullify the traditional maintenance of international peace and security, democratic transformation and economic activity. It is strongly linked to basic historical events. In addition to the need to defining such a shared historic proposition, it is vital that efforts to settle disputes be tempered by justice; if they are not, they may endanger the future. It may be difficult or even impossible to resolve certain disputes, but their settlement should be based on credible propositions.

Saudi Arabia has sought to contribute to the settlement of regional and international conflicts by bringing the parties together. We have undertaken numerous initiatives, including the Arab Peace Initiative for a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and the Arab States. Any derogation from the elements of the Initiative — such as the failure to recognize the State of Palestine within the borders of 4 June 1967, with its capital in Al-Quds Al-Sharif; questioning the right of the Palestinian refugees to return, in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations; or actions to weaken the full sovereignty of the State of Palestine — will undermine the foundations of justice and equity on which the final settlement will rest.

Any just settlement in Syria should start with the departure of those who have shed the blood of Syrian and are guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. They should have no role in formulating the future of the new Syria.Saudi Arabia has listened assiduously to the demands of all parties to the conflicts in Yemen, Lebanon, Somalia and elsewhere, and sought to achieve a settlement among them, including at the Taif conference that ended the civil war in Lebanon and through the Gulf initiative that helped Yemen transition from conflict to peace. We have also met with councils of elders in Somalia.

In all these initiatives, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabi has been well aware of the historical background of the conflicts. We have sought to resolve them in a manner that would allow us to benefit from their lessons. If settlement incorporates elements of amnesty or immunity, it should do so with the consent of all parties. The prevention of bloodshed must take precedence over vengeance. Justice can be achieved through amnesty and tolerance without detracting from historical realities. That principle was enshrined by the founder of our Kingdom, King Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and espoused by President Mandela of South Africa.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks to prevent conflict through dialogue. To that end, we have presented initatives of His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in an attempt to reach out to all religions and sects, including at the Conference of Group of Eight in 2008 and at a global forum on dialogue at the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, in cooperation with Spain and Austria. The dialogue included experts and well-known personalities, as well as political leaders, to enhance and promote peaceful coexistence in cultural and religious diversity, which will lead to permanent peace.

I wish to share with the Council some thoughts that I hope will be discussed at a level commensurate with their importance to the concept of the historical narrative and the quest for sustainable development. Achieving a shared historical narrative that uncovers both the truth and violations of human rights is one of the main pillars of justice and strengthens stability and peace. There is a pressing need to strike a balance between uncovering the truth and achieving justice and national reconciliation when striving for peace among the citizens of a shared homeland in a way that will lead to consensus and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Every situation is unique. That does not mean that we cannot benefit from the experiences of others. It simply stresses the dangers of generalizing and the imposition of inappropriate scenarios that could complicate the chances of achieving peace. The participation of the United Nations and its agencies should not bypass the will of stakeholders. It should help local parties to settle their disputes pursuant to their own aspirations, cultures and history. Therein lies the significance of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security, particularly with respect to peacekeeping operations.

The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, are morally responsible for preventing the exacerbation of conflicts and achieving sustainable peace. We welcome the creative ideas put forward by Jordan, and express particular support for the establishment of a United Nations historical advisory team to cooperate with the authorities of States in conflict in order to restore and protect important archives, record eyewitness testimonials, collect statistics and establish national archival committees.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Germany.

Mr. Thoms (Germany): This year we commemorate the centennary of the beginning of the First World War, and 75 years ago, Germany plunged humanity into the catastrophe that was the Second World War. The toll that both wars took — the suffering and the millions of dead — still leaves us speechless today. It strengthens our resolve to draw the right lessons from past conflicts instead of repeating the terrible mistakes of the past.

The collapse of the shaky balance of power 100 years ago in Europe was also a huge failure of diplomacy. That was the case not only for the days of the July crisis; already in the years before, diplomats and politicians alike had failed to construct institutions and instruments for building trust and coming to a peaceful trade-off of interests among neighbours. At the time, foreign policy dwelled on outdated paradigms that could not keep up with the highly interlinked and rapidly changing world that was the young twentieth century. When the disaster took its course, diplomacy lacked the means as much as the will to prevent the catastrophe. One hundred years later, that should be a great spur for us to draw lessons for the future by understanding the causes of past wars.

The year 2014 also marks the fall of the Iron Curtain 25 years ago. In Germany, we take it as a reminder that reconciliation and sustainable peace can indeed be achieved based on diplomatic and political efforts and mutual understanding.

From a European point of view, two key lessons have been drawn from the calamities of the first half of the twentieth century. The first was to strive with our partners around the world for an international order that is based on common rules and shared values. The United Nations is in itself a lesson learned from the atrocities of two world wars. As the second lesson, Europeans decided to replace the fragile equilibrium of their continent's powers with communities based on a new legal order. The project of the European Union was built on an ever-closer network of neighbouring countries interlinking politics, economies and societies. Today, war has become unthinkable within the European Union.

Overcoming the Franco-German antagonism was an important cornerstone of that achievement. It is a prime example of how a shared understanding of history and a common vision of the future can contribute to lasting peace and a prospering friendship. That concept is at the core of the Élysée Treaty signed in 1963 by both countries. It does not leave peace in the hands of politicians but makes it a cause for civil societies. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging youth jointly in the critical analysis of historic developments. Today, many students in France and Germany use the same Franco-German textbook when learning about their common history.

Open questions about the past can mean open wounds in the present. From its own experience, Germany cannot but underline the importance of learning from history in general and sharing an understanding about conflicts in particular. Working jointly on a better concept of why and how certain conflicts came about can serve as a powerful catalyst and solid foundation for reconciliation between two parties. It is an honourable cause for the United Nations to engage in supporting such processes where it can. The concept note (S/2014/30, annex) prepared by the presidency of the Council contains some very pertinent points for addressing this in practice.

However, the task may sound simpler than it is. Conflicts, may they be wars between States or civil wars, leave deep scars. Those springing from ethnic or other cultural backgrounds run particularly deep. The will to seek peace and true reconciliation can come only from the former adversaries themselves. Hence, there are limits to what can be achieved by third parties. As valuable as assistance from outside can be in those processes, those paramentres should be kept in mind when designing them. Nevertheless, the manifold commemorations that 2014 holds teach us about learning from history and sharing those lessons with our neighbours. That should be worth every effort.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Jordan's election as a member of the Security Council and on the way you have conducted the work of this body this month. You are aware of the profound esteem and consideration that the Spanish people have for the Jordanian people and of the fraternal relations that exist between our royal families. It will therefore not be a surprise that it is a great pleasure to participate in this open debate under Jordan's presidency. I would also like to express our thanks for the concept note (S/2014/30, annex).

The topic under consideration — the lessons we can and I dare say that we should derive from war and the search for a permanent peace — is one of profound importance. *War and Peace*, the title of Tolstoy's universal novel, outlines the history of humankind without offering a solution to its cyclical continuation. Seeing the world as a whole, one must admit that peace has had difficulty enduring unbroken in human history, despite the enormous intellectual efforts of illustrious minds such as of Emmanuel Kant. It has instead appeared in ephemeral intervals between armed conflicts. At most, peace attains to the imperfect quality of a truce. This perpetual motion marked by discord, in which relations between human groups are characterized by ambition to power, makes sense of the definition of war by Carl von Clausewitz as a continuation of politics by other means.

Our duty is to rebel against that tendency. The contributions that may result from this debate, as modest as they may be, must clearly demonstrate that the Members of the United Nations and its Security Council are aware that our fundamental obligation is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and that we are determined to take action to make a reality of the proclamation of those intentions in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations. We are called on to make a commitment that we cannot postpone any further in a world in which weapons of mass destruction hang dangerously like the Sword of Damocles over our heads.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of an ancient nation with a rich history of high points and low. Spain has been a protagonist in wars of religion, defensive wars, wars of intervention, wars of national survival, dynastic wars, civil wars and ideological wars. Spain has also suffered the pitiless scourge of terrorism. We have waged international wars, and we have shed blood in internal conflicts.

By our historical experience we could be considered an authority on the matter. Distinguished thinkers of our Golden Age — such as Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suárez or Domingo de Soto — bequeathed important texts on the moral problem of war, its lawfulness and the limits of its practice. The development of the concepts of *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*, which in the twentieth century have been incorporated into international law, is to a large extent indebted to their contributions.

War, contrary to a well-known adage, has never by definition been beautiful. But in the course of time, and as a result of technological advances, it can be asserted that war has become radically perverse. It would not be possible today for Velázquez, the great Spanish painter of the sixteenth century, to reflect on canvas an image like *The Surrender of Breda*, distinguished by the chivalrous gesture between the contenders at the end of the battle. Contemporary wars have assumed the cruel appearance of Goya's Black Paintings or of Picasso's *Guernica* mural, depicted on the tapestry that hangs outside this Chamber. Humankind must banish war for all time in this world plagued by challenges.

The year 2014 marks the centennary of the First World War, otherwise known as the Great War or Great European War, caused by the rivalry among the European Powers, of which the main theatre of operations was the Old World. It was a terrible conflict, which put a tragic end to that "world of yesterday" that Stefan Zweig recalled with a serene and painful clarity. The conflict troubles our conscience, both because of its destructive effects and because of the feeling that it could have been prevented or at least mitigated, if a will to reach a peaceful solution had prevailed over the ambition to impose a hegemonic vision.

The horrors of that war were, however, not sufficient to vaccinate us once and for all against the use of weapons as a way of resolving conflicts. The League of Nations was a praiseworthy attempt that failed, given that the period between the wars was marked by episodes that demonstrated its flaws. Another, even more devastating war was necessary, the Second World War, in order for Europe, with the contribution of a generation of extraordinary politicians, full of courage and vision, to lay the groundwork for a process leading to an economic and political union that has replaced armed conflict with cooperation and brute force with negotiation and compromise, as the representative of Germany just said.

Nor has the era of the United Nations been free of the scourge of war. Quite the opposite — the list of conflicts and atrocities is a long and in many cases, dreadful one.

Since "nothing human can be alien to us", the international community cannot remain insensitive to brutality. The responsibility to act against it befalls all of us, but in particular, the Organization and, within it, the Security Council, in accordance with the powers entrusted to it by the Charter. Spain supports all efforts by the Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General aimed at resolving conflicts that threaten international peace and security and which have cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims in Syria, Darfur, South Sudan, Somalia, Mali, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to mention just a few of the most horrifying examples.

On that point, I would like to appeal, loud and clear, for peace in the Middle East. Spain fervently hopes that the current negotiations will result in an agreement that will lay the definitive foundation for a just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, two neighbouring and democratic States, with secure borders. The world needs that good news, for which we cannot wait any longer.

To conclude, Mr. President, I would like to refer briefly to the problem of the "narrative" that you mention in your concept paper. I do that so as to affirm categorically the moral superiority of victims over victimizers. That assertion has universal validity — in extermination camps in Lidice, in Oradour, in Rwanda, in Srebenica — or just to give one national example, in the streets of Andoain and Guipúzcoa in Spain. We must keep and honour the memory of the victims, because it is just and necessary to dignify our condition as human beings and because reconciliation, which is a higher state than the mere absence of hostilities, must truly be rooted in truth and justice.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I would like to thank the Jordanian presidency for convening today's thematic debate and for its concept paper (S/2014/30, annex). I also want to thank the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing.

Today's debate offers an important opportunity to review the Security Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security, which may enable the Council to draw lessons through an understanding of war, which is necessary in order to achieve permanent peace.

After the First and the Second World Wars, humankind has constantly reiterated the promise of "never again". Unfortunately, even today, we continue to witness conflicts and wars in various parts of the world. Conflicts are followed by negotiations and the settlement of the disputes, resulting in peace agreements that represent an important first step in long-lasting processes of achieving peace and stability. In our statement today, we will focus on the phase that follows peace agreements, namely, the long path to achieving sustainable peace and stability.

The transition from the post-conflict period to a functional, reform-oriented and modern country is often affected by various side issues, obstacles and complexities within society. Political dialogue aimed at finding solutions to all open questions is an ongoing process that should help a country to complete its peacebuilding agenda, which is necessary in order for the collective priorities needed to achieve sustainable peace in the society to be set.

We reiterate that national ownership and national responsibility are crucial for establishing sustainable peace. With a view to ensuring national ownership, the primary responsibility for identifying priorities and strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding lies with the national authorities. Institution-building and governance, which provide citizens with security, justice and economic stability, are necessary in order to avoid repeated cycles of violence and instability.

However, in the post-conflict process, the transfer of responsibility from the international community, which is one of the stakeholders of the peace process, to domestic actors and institutions is a very delicate and extremely important task that should be carried out in a gradual and timely manner. The establishment of transitional administrative mechanisms by the international community should go hand in hand with enhancing the capacity of domestic institutions.

Coordinated, rapid action to support post-conflict Governments in building credible and accountable institutions is of critical importance for the success of the peacebuilding process as a whole. If properly executed, such action helps restore security, legitimacy, accountability and effectiveness, thus delivering clear peace dividends.

Post-conflict institution-building is a complex and demanding process, involving multiple stakeholders and the need to find a balance between achieving short-term results and long-term capacity development. The search for optimal solutions that achieve synergy in that multifaceted endeavour never ends.

Post-conflict societies often suffer deep divisions based on differing perceptions and interpretations of the past. That is why I would like to stress that national reconciliation and trust should be seen as additional basic prerequisites for building a functional State and society. Therefore, a necessary shared goal is to investigate crimes that were committed and to adequately prosecute the perpetrators of those crimes, regardless of who the perpetrators are. The rule of law, the implementation of existing human rights instruments and the sustainable return and local integration of refugees and internally displaced persons must be the priority of the country. In addition, the promotion of regional cooperation is of great importance to the process. All of those activities and efforts are seen as necessary steps to achieve national reconciliation. However, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, even 20 years after the conclusion of the conflict, the reconciliation process is still ongoing. Our experience is that reconciliation is a long-term process that requires genuine and permanent partners at the local, national and international levels. Allow me to briefly inform the Council about our innovative initiative to promote dialogue and reconciliation in this phase of our post-conflict development.

The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina approached the Secretary-General last year with a request for United Nations assistance to further advance our peace and reconciliation process, conscious of the Organization's long-standing expertise and comparative knowledge in that area. The Presidency identified education and culture as critical areas that could act as a springboard for dialogue and reconciliation to take deeper root in the country. Based on that request and initiative by the Presidency, a joint project by the United Nations country team, which includes elements from the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and UNESCO, has since been developed, entitled "Dialogue for the Future". It seeks to strengthen the local capacity for promoting coexistence, the peaceful resolution of conflict and reconciliation through the establishment of a dialogue platform that links senior decision-makers such as the Presidency, citizens and civil society.

The project also envisions the establishment of a grant facility to fund local initiatives in the arts, culture and education, with a focus on youth, which would promote coexistence and respect for diversity through civic and intercultural dialogue, and a communications and outreach strategy to enhance public perceptions of peace, reconciliation and respect for diversity. The aim of the initiative is to catalyse further peacebuilding processes and outcomes such as, first, strengthened domestic capacities for promoting coexistence, the peaceful resolution of conflict and reconciliation; secondly, improved public perceptions of, and attitudes towards, coexistence, the peaceful resolution of conflict, reconciliation and respect for diversity; and, thirdly, increased engagement by citizens, in particular youth, civil society and leaders in activities and initiatives on intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

We also agree with the position contained in the concept note on the need to enable the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to draw lessons from its understanding of war and of what is necessary to achieve a permanent peace. The fact is that the Security Council regularly considers issues of post-conflict peacebuilding. However, in some cases, the United Nations does not understand well enough how it can help achieve reconciliation among ex-combatants and their peoples based on an agreed or shared narrative and a shared memory of the troubled past. That is one of the reasons that it is important for the Security Council to exchange views with those Member States that have first-hand experience in crises and peacebuilding processes. Such exchanges can help optimize United Nations peacebuilding mechanisms and enhance our common understanding of the current challenges we face in peacebuilding.

We understand the message Jordan sent in the concept note regarding this thematic debate on the theme "War, its lessons and the search for permanent peace". According to the Charter, one of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. It takes collective measures to prevent threats to peace and stability in the world. The suggestion of the Security Council presidency to mandate a small United Nations historical advisory team or international historical commission requires more attention and could be addressed during General Assembly negotiations on the reform of the Security Council and its working methods.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba welcomes the holding of this open debate of the

Security Council to tackle such an important topic as the maintenance of international peace and security.

We believe it timely to start by recalling that this Organization that brings us all together was born when its founders set the goal of preserving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The founding Charter of the Organization calls on us to practice tolerance and to live together in peace as good neighbours and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. That is precisely the primary objective of the Charter of the United Nations, that is, to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations that might lead to a breach of the peace. Likewise, another objective of the Charter is to foster friendly relations between nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

We believe that the pacifist vocation of the Organization has been endorsed by its Member States since its foundation. Unfortunately, international peace has not been achieved.

In our opinion, the lessons of war are only, on balance, a litany of losses: millions of human victims, the destruction of the historical and cultural heritage of our civilization and a panorama of devastation that various peoples across the world have suffered. Longing for peace and creating organs and mechanisms seeking to implement it are not enough. We must eliminate the causes conspiring against peace.

Some of such dangers to peace include hegemonic and imperialistic domination and its interests, acts of aggression, the struggle to seize natural resources, persistent colonialist and neocolonialist strategies and practices, the unjust and exclusionary current international order, unequal exchanges, discrimination, xenophobia, interventionism and violations of peoples' right to self-determination.

There cannot be peace and security as long as unilateral and extraterritorial measures are imposed by one State against another, as is the case with the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba has been for over 50 years now. Solidarity, cooperation, international assistance and joint action to eliminate poverty, unemployment, hunger, inequalities and the underlying causes thereof are necessary to prevent conflicts. There cannot be development without peace and stability and peace and stability will not exist without development. There will be no peace and security for a people that are seriously threatened by hunger, malnutrition, a lack of sanitation and access to drinking water, illiteracy, high rates of infant mortality, a short life expectancy and death from preventable diseases.

International peace and security can be maintained only if there is respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Such principles establish the sovereign equality of all States, the peaceful settlement of international disputes, the renunciation of the threat or use of force against any other State and non-interference in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and should fulfil that role in accordance with the powers vested in it by the Charter. We advocate an urgent and thorough reform of this organ that turns it into a democratic and effective forum for the accomplishment of its mandate. The Security Council should promote peaceful solutions and resist resorting to war. Those solutions should never stir up armed confrontations, let alone be champions of the philosophy of regime change, which, in practice, contradicts the pacifist essence of the Organization.

We are concerned about the increasing tendency by the Security Council to reinterpret the mandate entrusted to it under the Charter and to take on functions that do not belong to it, appropriating the role granted by the Charter to other main organs of the Organization, in particular the General Assembly. We reiterate the key role and authority of the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security as the most democratic and representative principal organ of the United Nations.

The effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations requires those operations to be established in full compliance with the principles of consent of the parties, impartiality and the use of force only for self-defence. We support an integrated and coordinated vision among the various levels and actors in peace configuration processes. The criteria of the Peacebuilding Commission and its offices in the field should have a greater say in decision-making within the United Nations system, in particular on matters concerning peace and security that are assessed by the Security Council and relate to certain States under the Commission's consideration.

We agree that the topic of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and international security today is undoubtedly one of the major challenges of the international community. We strongly believe that international peace and security will continue to be at risk as long as nuclear weapons, which threaten the survival of humankind, are not completely eliminated. Cuba will continue to work actively in its national capacity and as a member of other groups of States, such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), to achieve the complete elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons.

I take this opportunity to recall that, on 26 September, we will celebrate for the first time the International Day for Nuclear Disarmament as a result of the decision of the General Assembly. That will be an important time for renewing our efforts towards the complete elimination of such weapons.

Allow me to underscore that the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States is taking place in Havana today as a consolidation of the integrationist will of the peoples of the region. As proof of the commitment to peace by CELAC's members, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC have just declared the Latin American and Caribbean region a zone of peace, in which differences among nations will be solved peacefully by means of dialogue and negotiation or other forms of settlement, in full accordance with international law.

My delegation reaffirms in this forum the unwavering commitment of the Cuban people to peace. In that regard, the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, said that the struggle of peoples for their sovereignty and independence is the struggle for peace. Cuba has struggled for peace by fighting the exploitation of man by man. Cuba has struggled for peace by defending its sovereignty.

I will conclude with the words of Cuba's national hero, José Martí, when, seeking a bright future for the people, he declared, "The future is peace".

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to congratulate Jordan on bringing this important issue to the Security Council. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting and for proposing this important topic for our debate today.

As the topic encompasses a wide range of issues, I believe that we need to adopt a two-fold approach with a view to addressing the general and particular questions that the topic implies. First, we need to adopt a general approach to consider the lessons of wars and how a permanent peace could be established and maintained. Secondly, we need to review in particular how the Security Council has so far fulfilled its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Generally speaking, peace could be maintained and strengthened in the long run only by removing the conditions that nurture war, conflict, terrorism and violence, by ensuring the rule of law at all levels and by increasing the effectiveness of the international institutions responsible for enhancing and maintaining peace and security. To that end, the economic, social, political and geopolitical aspects of the different situations should be taken into consideration and an inclusive approach and coordinated policies at the various levels should be adopted by all the relevant actors in order to address those situations. While States have the primary responsibility to address issues in their entirety, the contribution of regional and international organizations in areas such as poverty eradication, the promotion of human rights, education and cultural diversity is also crucial and will help to create a strong base for peace within and among nations.

In that regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran is a country in which all minorities and ethnic groups live in peace as one Iranian nation. Their rights are fully recognized by the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Government. We strongly believe that respect for other religions and ethnic groups is a vital element in maintaining peace and security in the country and beyond.

With regard to regional issues, Iran has always played a constructiove role in promoting peace, tolerance and security in the region and with its neighbours, from Afghanistan to Iraq. Our hosting of about 3 million Afghan refugees for more than three decades in Iran and providing for their educational and living needs, regardless of their religion or ethnicity, is a good example of Iran's commitment to promoting peace, security and tolerance.

Let me remind the Council of a phrase in the UNESCO Constitution that is relevant here. It states, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". On that basis, any contribution by the relevant organizations to the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and coexistence and the prevention of the spread of violent and extremist mindsets helps further the cause of peace. Crimes that we witness currently in parts of the Middle East, in which innocent civilians are targeted, emanate from violent extremism and sectarianism. Such mentalities disrupt smooth and friendly relationships among nations.

In that regard, we should recognize the timely action of the General Assembly in adopting by consensus resolution 68/127, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism", which was based on an idea presented by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the General Assembly.

Undoubtedly, the General Assembly has an important role to play in furthering peace and addressing all aspects of any issue or crisis that may compromise peace. One of the aspects that I should highlight here is the Assembly's role in addressing disarmament in its entirety, and I draw attention to the important step that the Assembly took in holding the first-ever High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11) in September 2013.

With regard to how the Security Council in particular has so far fulfilled its primary responsibility in maintaining international peace and security, I would like to stress that the picture is rather gloomy. A glance at the performance of the Council over the past 68 years would be rather indicative of many instances in which it failed to rise up to the expectations of the general membership. In many cases, the Council failed to act promptly and effectively. There are instances where political considerations led to the paralysis of the Council and resulted in the frequent use of the veto power. As a result, wars spread, conflicts were prolonged and aggressors and violators persisted in their acts and were further emboldened. Also as a result, many precious lives were lost and much misery was spread. The failure of the Council to address the blatant invasion of Iran by the then Iraqi regime, which led to a bloody eight-year war and the unchecked use of chemical weapons by that regime, is a clear example in that respect.

Another clear example is the Palestinian crisis, which has unfolded before the eyes of succeeding generations for more than 60 years. The failure of the Council in that case has meant the continuation of the occupation of the lands of other nations by the Israeli regime, a situation that lies at the heart of that crisis and many other difficult situations in the Middle East. The very basic right of a whole people to self-determination has been denied in that case, and the Council has yet to lift a finger to reinstate that right. Even worse, despite the condemnation of the whole world, the illegal settlement building by the Israeli regime continues unabated, while the Council fails to address it, owing to political considerations.

While the Council is primarily responsible for maintaining peace and security and could be fairly criticized for what it has done and has failed to do over the past 68 years, I believe that we need to look earnestly at the way it is structured and at the way it functions. Almost 20 years ago, all Member States rejoiced at the start of a process to reform the Council, and now we are all dismayed at the impasse that that process faces.

As the Council is a relic of the past and with its record before us, I believe that only a transparent, democratic and truly representative Council that reflects the new makeup of the current international community could rise up to the expectations that we the peoples of the United Nations have for it.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Jordan for organizing this debate on the theme "Wwar, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace", and for circulating the revised concept paper (S/2014/30, annex) for this debate. We have listened with interest to the views expressed by other delegations so far on this subject.

The topic of our debate today is directly relevant to the work of the Security Council as the organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security. It is useful to recall that in 1945, when the Charter of the United Nations was agreed to, the focus of the Organization was on preventing the "scourge of war", a direct reference to the destruction caused by the First and Second World Wars.

This year, when we commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, my delegation would like to recall the fact that tens of thousands of Indian soldiers paid with their lives for the eventual victory of the Allied forces in both of those Wars. India is committed to finding lasting solutions to the scourge of war and was among the original founders both of the League of Nations, in 1919, and of the United Nations, in 1945.

As we see it, the concept paper for this debate deals with five broad issues. On the first issue, relating to international and internal conflicts, India's position is that the mandate of the Security Council must remain focused on international conflict situations. As the single largest troop-contributing country to Security Council-mandated peacekeeping operations over the past six decades, we have deployed more than 170,000 troops in 43 out of the 64 United Nations peacekeeping operations so far. Our experience shows that robust international cooperation among the concerned Member States of the United Nations is the most sustainable method for addressing conflicts between them. That would also apply to the robust mandate given to a portion of United Nations peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, adopted in resolution 2098 (2013), in March 2013, and the United Nations peacekeeping response to the internal conflict in South Sudan, as set out in resolution 2132 (2013), of December 2013. An internationally supported political process in those two operations would sustain the efforts of the more than 6,000 Indian soldiers actively engaged in carrying out the Security Council's mandate, including the protection of civilians.

On the second issue, of forging deeper reconciliation among ex-combatants, it may be useful to look at the historical record in international relations. The most relevant one for our debate today, as has been referred to by several speakers before me, is the evolution of the European Union since the end of the Second World War. That is a case of ex-combatant Governments coming together to create, with the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2010, a new political reality on a continent that had historically been fractured into warring parties. There are similar practical examples in other parts of the world, where the strengths of individual nations formerly in conflict against each other are being voluntarily and collectively pooled to craft a new paradigm of constructive international cooperation, contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security. That process of constructive cooperation based on dialogue is the biggest strength underpinning the United Nations system today.

The third issue of what is called reverse engineering history, while conceptually an interesting one, is, in our view, a task best handled by distinguished academicians, including historians, rather than being entrusted to the intergovernmental structure at the United Nations. As we discover each passing day, there are many more important facts related to historical narratives that have been, and indeed continue to be, suppressed from public dissemination by Governments of Member States. The process of the declassification of those historical records is subject to governmental rules and procedures, and is not automatic. Even the documents that are declassified often are heavily redacted. Therefore, reverse engineering historical narratives is dependent upon an ideal situation, which perhaps can never prevail in our imperfect world, namely, the full and unedited disclosure of facts. It is because of that important aspect that my delegation would caution against any proposal for the United Nations to re-examine historical narratives.

With regard to the fourth issue, that of sustainable peace, my delegation is of the view that the maintenance of international peace and security will become more sustainable if we agree to adopting a holistic and equitable approach to relations between Member States. The United Nations has an extensive agenda devoted to issues under the purview of the General Assembly, including on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. Sustainable development will play a crucial role in sustaining and contributing to international peace and security.

Fifthly, there is a proposal in the concept note for mandating a small United Nations historical advisory team to assist in setting up national archives or historical commissions. As has been pointed out, that is indeed a sensitive issue. However, it is an important issue. Perhaps the best place for us to make a beginning on formulating a way forward on such an idea would be the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. I suggest this because the work that any proposed United Nations historical unit would eventually have to do would need to be grounded on an approach based on the core principles of international law and the interpretation of documents. In our view, such a concept should therefore be entrusted to our colleagues in the Sixth Committee who, with their legal acumen and gravitas, would be best placed to deal with the concept in a sound and objective manner.

In conclusion, I come back to where we began, which is the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security on a sustainable basis so that the scourge of war is indeed prevented. In our view, the most important challenge to international peace and security and conflict prevention as far as the United Nations is concerned is not the understanding of the historical process but a realization that our platform for global governance in this area, namely, the Security Council, is no longer reflective of contemporary reality. The Security Council requires comprehensive reform in its membership, with an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. That is essential both for its credibility and for the continued confidence of the international community in the institution.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on taking the initiative of convening this important and far-reaching open debate of the Security Council on the theme "War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace". My delegation also expresses its appreciation to you for the thought-provoking concept paper on that theme (S/2014/40, annex). I should also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

I wish to begin by outlining Malaysia's commitment as an active and strong partner in international efforts to support peace. We were blessed with a peaceful transition to independence in 1957, instilling in us a belief in the peaceful resolution of conflicts via the means stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. From the distant jungles of the Congo, less than three years after our own independence, to the winters of Bosnia and Herzegovina under United Nations and NATO banners, and closer to home in Timor-Leste, Malaysian peacekeepers are proud to have been entrusted to participate in those and many other multilateral peacekeeping operations.

From a regional perspective, Malaysia has maintained a keen interest in taking a comprehensive approach in addressing threats to regional security, especially within the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. In that regard, we have been actively involved in facilitating peace talks and constructive engagements, culminating in mutually acceptable solutions such as the historical framework agreement on 15 October 2012 between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Four days ago, the final and integral annexes to that agreement were signed by both parties during a landmark round of talks in Kuala Lumpur, paving the way towards permanent peace in the region. Malaysia's efforts to facilitate those important negotiations have been recognized and commended by the Secretary-General, the United States, the European Union and members of the international contact group.

Malaysia also hosted the first Annual Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council Meeting, from 11 to 12 November 2013, in Putrajaya. As Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Haji Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak stated in his keynote address to that forum, "We should be unafraid to use the power of persuasion to counter the misguided rallying calls of the extremists". That commitment to moderation from the highest levels of Malaysia's leadership underlines our conviction of the urgent need for common narratives to address divergent perspectives in conflicts.

Responding to your suggestion, Sir, on the reverse engineering of conflicts, Malaysia reiterates its long-held belief that it is necessary to address the root causes of such conflicts, be they underdevelopment, poverty, political disputes, or the preservation of national, socio-cultural and ethno-religious identities. Based on our experiences, we would therefore submit that an agreed or shared narrative could lead to undermining the reason for conflicts, in particular those driven by elements propagating an extremist or exclusionist point of view. At the same time, my delegation is of the view that we must continue to be guided by the principles of international law in the persecution of those responsible for such conflicts.

With regard to the specific suggestion to mandate a United Nations historical advisory team to recover or protect documents related to a shared historical narrative, my delegation wishes to present the following points to ponder.

It is our view that the involvement on the ground of such a team should, in principle, depend upon the request or concurrence of the host country. Malaysia has already argued that nation-building programmes and governmental reform cannot be imposed by external entities; instead, such efforts must be inclusive, have strong national ownership and, as well, possess a legal mandate to lead change. However, that naturally presents challenges should the host country itself be one of the belligerent parties to the conflict, whereby it could be in the interests of that host country to maintain its own version of events.

In addition, we should be cautious in defining the roles and capacities of the international community when trying to implement such a step. It would be detrimental to the interests of the United Nations if the aims of its historical advisory teams were politically motivated, as opposed to the work of independent and impartial bodies. Furthermore, my delegation fears that this process may lack transparency.

That notwithstanding, the important work of collating a shared historical narrative of conflicts should continue. In that regard, my delegation takes note of the work of the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, an institution that we believe has benefited greatly from your personal participation, Mr. President. The Institute's publication *Zoom In: Palestinian Refugees of 1948, Remembrances* portrays the striking differences in which Palestinian and Israeli youth views photographs from the 1948 Nakbah. The publication demonstrates the need for greater understanding and a common history of the incident, the consequences of which resound to this very day.

We recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all formula to achieving permanent peace. We also observe that, at present, there may be insufficient quantitative evidence to assess the risks of deprioritizing the need for a reconciliatory narrative. However, there is a growing awareness that preventing a relapse into conflict is one of the more difficult aspects of addressing post-conflict situations. Within the United Nations system, that may manifest itself through challenges ranging from funding gaps to a lack of institutional support. In spite of that, it is perhaps within the United Nations system itself that the potential for permanent peace can be found and, in our view, it can be found through the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Malaysia continues to believe that the Security Council has benefited tremendously from its increased interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission, particularly given the linkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The building of State institutions during the peacekeeping period will have a significant impact on a successful transition into the peacebuilding stage. As we have argued, the failure to work closely and effectively with national Governments and local stakeholders in ensuring a sustainable institutional architecture could possibly bring back instability to the country concerned. It is perhaps in that connection that the Peacebuilding Commission could play an enhanced role, inter alia, in generating a shared historical understanding between parties to the conflict.

In that regard, Malaysia welcomes greater connectivity and interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council to enhance further work in the development of practical peacebuilding policies. My delegation underscores the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body entrusted to coordinate and integrate approaches on post-conflict peacebuilding measures, to help countries from relapsing into conflict. As such, the principal organs of the United Nations should be enhanced and strengthened, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission's advisory role on peacebuilding matters with the Security Council.

In conclusion, Malaysia reiterates its position that the silent majority should speak out so as to drown out the extreme voices of hate, fear and ignorance. A shared historical narrative is one of several ways for moderates to overcome the control of extremists over the political discourse of a conflict. We should, at the same time, continue to support existing United Nations organs that can play an important role in maintaining a permanent peace, in particular, the Peacebuilding Commission. To that end, I wish to assure you, Sir, of Malaysia's continued support for international efforts to achieve peace and nation rebuilding initiatives in post-conflict situations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Naanda (Namibia): Once again, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2014, and further wish to thank you for organizing this very important debate, considering that heinous atrocities are committed on a daily basis throughout the world, posing a threat to the very existence of the social democratic order that we as the international community have developed over the years, a debate that seeks to draw lessons from an understanding of war in the quest to achieve lasting and sustainable peace.

I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman for his informative briefing on the role of the United Nations in promoting sustainable peace, and in particular the lessons learned and the challenges that remain in post-conflict situations.

The Namibian nation was founded in 1990, after a bitter liberation struggle during which our people were subjected to numerous massacres. As such, our history is one replete with systematic human rights abuses. We achieved our independence with the active support and engagement of the international community. We are proud to be known as one of the success stories of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives. Article 96 of the Namibian Constitution commits the country and its people to the promotion of international peace and security. For that reason, Namibia participates in various peacekeeping missions throughout the world as mandated by the Council.

As many delegations that have already spoken have said, there is universal recognition that the United Nations has a major role to play not only in the immediate aftermath of the resolution of conflicts but also in conceiving and conducting long-term post-conflict initiatives. Those have included demobilization, disarmament and reintegration, thereby strengthening judicial systems and, as in our own case, the training of civil servants to provide services during the transitional period and the post-conflict era. Therefore, beyond conflict resolution and stabilization, the path must be charted for democracy, development and the strengthening of the rule of law.

We are of the opinion that more attention should be given to the United Nations role in post-conflict reconciliation. We therefore welcome the establishment of institutions such as the Peacebuilding Commission, which can go a long way to addressing the challenges that are associated with national reconciliation due to the diversity of the actors. In that regard, we wish to caution that there is no single model that is applicable to reconciliation at the national level. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to national reconciliation is counter-productive. What works in one situation may not be applicable to another given the national and, to a certain extent regional, the dynamics of a particular situation. In Namibia, for example, at our independence we adopted a policy of national reconciliation that gave blanket amnesties to both sides. That policy has served us well, and the country enjoys peace, stability and democracy.

Cognizant of the contemporary rhetoric that there can be no real peace without justice, the focus of reconciliation shifts to victims and retributive justice. We may also have to agree that, in the uncompromising pursuit of higher standards of justice, a peace that is delicate may not be sustainable. That is especially our experience in the southern African region, but also in many other parts of the African continent. The challenge for us has been the reintegration of former combatants into mainstream society while at the same time bringing a sense of justice to the victims and defending the principles of the rule of law without provoking a destabilizing backlash, especially in situations where political stability has been fragile. Our experience has therefore been one where compromises have had to be made and restorative justice balanced with retributive justice as well as the granting of amnesties.

The role of women in conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding is of great importance. Therefore, Namibia fully supports the inclusion of women in security systems such as the armed forces, the police and peacekeeping operations and special political missions in support of various United Nations resolutions that recognize that important role. We remain convinced that, for the achievement of a comprehensive and sustainable peace, all efforts should be made to ensure the participation and contribution of women in peace negotiations and during the execution of post-conflict strategies and programmes.

We furthermore welcome the adoption by the General Assembly of the Arms Trade Treaty, the first international legal instrument that explicitly includes a gender criterion in arms transfers if there is a possibility that such transfers would be used to commit violence against women and children.

In conclusion, I should like to recognize the important institutional partnership between the Council and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In Africa, for example, we have adopted a zero tolerance policy for unconstitutional changes of Government. Coup leaders are isolated and their countries are immediately suspended from the African Union.

In the same vein, Africa has provided a clear definition of an unconstitutional change of Government, which includes the manipulation of electoral laws. In that regard, we urge the United Nations to work towards adopting the same principle. At the subregional level the Southern African Development Community has scrupulously observed that principle with respect to Madagascar.

While the policy of opposing the unconstitutional change of Government has been upheld, a new form of the unconstitutional change of Government has emerged where army mutinies become part of the so-called inclusive Government, which have proved not to be sustainable. Namibia believes that if that situation is allowed to continue, the African Union principle of zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of Government will be undermined. That trend should be discouraged and more sustainable initiatives should be explored.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Le Hoai Trung (Viet Nam): Allow me first, Mr. President, to congratulate you and the Jordanian delegation on the excellent work done during your Security Council presidency for the month of January 2014. We commend your initiative to hold today's debate on the theme "War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace", which is related to the overriding purpose of the collective work of the United Nations.

War and peace have been the first and foremost concern of humankind throughout history, and even more today because of the catastrophic consequences of two world wars and numerous other conflicts. It is the devastation of wars that brought the international community together in unprecedented collective endeavours "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to promote social progress and better standards of life as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

Since its inception, nearly seven decades ago, the United Nations has proved to be instrumental in preventing another world war that could, tragically, entirely destroy human civilization. The United Nations has worked hard to de-escalate, find solutions to, and address the consequences of conflicts throughout the world. Yet conflicts, both between and within States, still wreak havoc on millions of lives and the development of too many nations. It is therefore critical that we reflect on what has produced such tragic outcomes in certain places, what has prevented them in others and what we can do to build a lasting peace for all. Our delegation would like to touch upon a number of lessons of history.

First, history has shown that too often wars and conflicts stem from obsolete doctrines of power politics, the ambition of domination and the imposition and the threat or use of force in settling international disputes, including those related to territorial and jurisdictional claims.

Secondly, history has also shown that warlike forces will eventually meet with setbacks no matter how much power they may be able to amass initially. The aspirations of nations for their independence, sovereignty and other invaluable, legitimate rights are a source of great strength.

Thirdly, however, once broken out, wars and conflicts cause enormous suffering to human beings and grave consequences for many aspects of the life of nations directly involved as well as of others, especially in today's highly connected world. Unfortunately, a number of them are associated with historical legacies, misperceptions, misunderstandings and unintended incidents.

Nowadays the United Nations and its Member States have more and better means to prevent conflict and war. We must build, strengthen and make the best use of the institutions of peace, including the development of international law, international and regional organizations and mechanisms to facilitate dialogue, confidence-building and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We must denounce the use or threat of use of force in international relations and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and a culture of peace. We believe that those are the most marked advancements of the United Nations from the League of Nations, but much more still requires to be done. In that regard, the issues raised by the President of the Security Council are highly important. We must assist nations in the aftermath of wars and conflict to rebuild and reconcile, to address the root causes of conflict and to ensure lasting peace.

As the Security Council is entrusted by the entire membership of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council should constantly promote themes and measures to consolidate peace and prevent war and conflict. It requires consistent effort by the Council to find peaceful solutions to ongoing international disputes and conflicts, as well as the determined search for measures conducive to the promotion of peace. In that connection, the permanent members of the Council bear special responsibility.

Having had to go through wars to defend our national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, Viet Nam understands at first hand the consequences of wars and conflicts. Viet Nam therefore strongly shares an ardent desire for peace. As our Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, emphasized in his speech before the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.16), there is an urgent and immense need to build and reinforce strategic trust, internationally and regionally, through concrete and constructive behaviour and adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Only in such an environment of strategic trust, in which every country is a responsible stakeholder, will the world enjoy a better security environment and will the lessons of war be fully utilized.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on its assumption and effective discharge of the presidency functions of the Security Council during the month of January. We are also grateful to the delegation of Jordan for having organized this open debate on such an important topic.

The concept paper (S/2014/30, annex) prepared by the presidency raises a very fundamental problem. Indeed, too often we encounter premeditated attempts to falsify history, in particular its most traumatic episodes, or to weaponize the past in order to inculcate enmity and hatred and instigate wars against other nations. Hence, generations are born trapped in a deep sense of hatred and intolerance. But history can also serve or be taught to promote respect towards other peoples and cultures, to accept differences and to develop an ability to coexist.

In a number of situations, important efforts have helped to reduce tensions and have ensured that peace and reconciliation processes have moved forward. At the same time, more should be done to address the major threats and challenges that continue to affect the basic elements of the international legal order, undermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of States and regenerate disregard and contempt for human rights.

There should be a better understanding that States acting in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, violating international humanitarian and human rights law and disregarding Security Council resolutions, may forestall enforcement countermeasures only by putting a prompt end to their illegal acts and negotiating in good faith the prospects for permanent peace, stability and cooperation. The fact that illegal situations continue because of political circumstances does not mean that they are thereby rendered legal or can go on forever.

It is important to underline the role of the rule of law in preventing conflict, mitigating the effects of the conflict once it has arisen and in resolving conflicts and thus establishing a stable and durable peace. Integral to the existing challenges and efforts towards searching for a sustainable peace is the need to ensure accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, both for individual perpetrators and for parties to conflict.

As practice shows, wrongs left unpunished or unrecognized can impede the achievement of long-awaited peace and reconciliation and can easily lead to the eruption of new conflicts and the commission of new crimes. The establishment of truth about serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during conflicts, and the need for institutional actions to prevent the repetition of such violations, are all necessary prerequisites for true conflict resolution.

It is essential to address conflict-related violations by all available means, including, inter alia, by creating judicial mechanisms and mandating international commissions of inquiry or fact-finding missions to ascertain precisely the facts in contention. The imperative of establishing and documenting truth, shedding light on real facts and combating impunity is undeniable. Such efforts must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches.

It is obvious that no peace settlement can be reached that is inconsistent with international law, particularly where peremptory norms are concerned, such as the prohibition on the use of force and the obligation to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States. It is important that conflict settlement frameworks are not used as a tool to consolidate a priori illegal and fait accompli-based solutions. No doubt, attempts to impose or encourage such solutions will fail to provide the necessary foundations for enduring peace and long-term stability.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Everyone is familiar with the saying that "truth is the first victim of war". If that is so, then it is reasonable to assume that the foremost task in the post-war order should be to restore truth. Yet that is a formidable task. What constitutes truth in a post-conflict context that is torn apart by divergent historical narratives? The tragic legacy of violence and atrocities not only results in the immeasurable loss of human life and property, but also is in violation of the conscience of humankind, as mentioned in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When nothing is done to overcome the legacy of conflict, it can dramatically affect future generations. We therefore have a moral imperative to fight against impunity, to develop strategies for transitional justice and to face up to the past, so as to embark on the path of truth.

The international community has made considerable progress in developing norms that make it possible to ensure victims the right to truth and justice, as well to receive reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. The combination of those four elements contributes to a higher degree of accountability for the perpetrators, and to addressing the needs of the victims. Guarantees of non-recurrence in particular, for instance through institutional reforms, pave the way towards coexistence and reconciliation. Experience shows that reconciliation is a long-term endeavour that requires significant work involving memory. In other words, ensuring sustainable peace requires righting past grievances. Switzerland acknowledges and supports the efforts of all Governments that are courageously tackling those difficult issues and are trying to develop their own national strategies for dealing with the past. We also commend the work of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

With regard to Syria and all other ongoing conflicts, the search for lasting peace entails combating impunity. To prevent further atrocities, it is crucial to re-establish a system whereby each person assumes their responsibility and is accountable. That is why, returning to the problem of truth and historical memory, we strongly support the establishment of fact-finding commissions and commissions of investigation, such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. We also want to recall that, on the initiative of Switzerland, close to 60 States formally petitioned the Council one year ago to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. As atrocities spread, truth and justice, as well as reparations and institutional reforms, are more important than ever. Those measures are central to any lasting peace.

In line with the practical suggestions made by the Jordanian presidency about what the Council and the international community can do, I should like to mention some of the efforts that Switzerland has undertaken. Several years ago, Switzerland launched a project with the objective of protecting and preserving archives related to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The project provides technical assistance to States and civil society organizations that request support in protecting their archives and creating databases that could contribute to the establishment of the facts and to the preservation of historical memory. Thanks to a bilateral agreement, for instance, Switzerland has on file a backup copy of the national police archives of Guatemala. Switzerland has also taken specific initiatives regarding the dissemination of good practices of fact-finding and investigation commissions. Last November, a seminar was held in Geneva in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, during which the High Commissioner shared its guidelines for the very first time.

Finally, Switzerland would like once again to stress the commitment of the Security Council to the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and the promotion of necessary preventive action to settle disputes in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. Preventing armed conflict is a more desirable strategy to ensure lasting peace and security than having to react to violent clashes.

Stepping away from my written text, I should like to make a quick personal comment in conclusion. When I read the title of your proposal for the theme of today's discussion, Sir, it reminded me of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who wrote a tract on eternal peace. I did some research into that philosopher and found that he had the idea of writing a tract on eternal peace by looking at the text of an innkeeper's sign called simply "Eternal Peace". It was interesting to me that the sign at that inn showed it to be a cemetery. It showed that the only eternal peace that we will find is after our mortal lives are ended. I hope truly that this debate will help to ensure that eternal peace will be seen by the living world, and not just in the afterlife. I am pleased that this debate is making such a big contribution.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): Allow me, Mr. President, to thank you and your delegation for having convened this very important meeting on this crucial topic. I should like also to stress that Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

One of last century's most influential advocates of world peace, His Holiness Pope John XXIII, used to say, "Let us strive to find that which unites rather than that which divides". That concise but powerful sentence offers us guidance in our quest for permanent peace and security, the core business of the United Nations. Through seven decades of efforts in pursuit of this goal, through trials and failures, we have come to understand that it is difficult, but not impossible, to achieve.

It requires solid foundations that must be carefully laid. Peace is not only a matter of signing a treaty. It cannot be imposed; it can arise only from a mutual understanding of the parties involved and from their recognition of that which unites.

This is just the starting point — the precondition to a lasting peace. This is what we learned from the Mozambican experience. A successful and still-lasting peace agreement for Mozambique was signed in Rome in October 1992.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations at that time, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, called this peace the "Italian formula": a patient exercise of reconciliation between the parties to a conflict, engineered by a coalition of actors that included the Italian Government, the Italian opposition, an Italian non-governmental organization, the Catholic Church and, of course, all of the Mozambican actors in that crisis.

Once an agreement has been signed and a ceasefire reached, some conditions have to be met for peace to last. Respect for human rights is paramount, as is setting the conditions for social and economic development. All of those matters are an essential part of the Organization's job today.

Last week, the Permanent Mission of Italy had the privilege of co-hosting here at Headquarters an event to commemorate Martin Luther King Day. At that event, dedicated to the threat of growing inequalities, Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz warned us of the perils of economic inequalities, a ticking time-bomb. That issue must form a crucial part of our reflection on how to achieve permanent peace and a fundamental element of our inter-State cooperation. The widening gap between those who have too much and those who have too little is a source of destabilization in our world. We need to bear this in mind and be ambitious in our quest for permanent peace and on the path to the new agenda for international development.

The United Nations does a remarkable, difficult and often misunderstood job, through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a job that Italy fully supports. Our Organization is too often blamed for conflicts in the world, but no club is greater than the sum of its members. The United Nations can only try to deal with the troubles its Members create. That will be especially difficult if the Organization lacks the necessary tools and structure. That is why Italy supports the long-needed reform of the Security Council, the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. To be effective, this reform needs to conform to a set of binding principles, namely, inclusiveness, representation and accountability. The reform must increase the Council's flexibility and its interaction with the general membership, which should perceive it as a reliable, not an exclusive, club.

Ultimately, what the United Nations is about is a world without war. This goal is reflected in every aspect of our work, and it must be our guideline and our ambition, in every decision we take.

Finally, allow me to come back to our experience in Mozambique. The lesson that we learned, which is even more relevant today, is that peace is a dynamic process. It should not just be preserved; it must also grow, becoming a safeguard for human rights, economic development, stability of life, democratic institutions, security and the rule of law. Today as in the past, there is a need to seek out that which unites.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate. The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union.

In 1992, I saw personally the horrible results of war when I visited Beirut from my posting in Damascus. I saw a city destroyed, and I saw the lives of people damaged. At that time, I realized that there is one key lesson from war: that we have to do our utmost to prevent it and that the search for peace is a common moral imperative.

Here I will address the issues of prevention, accountability and reconciliation.

When it comes to prevention, strengthening the international legal order is crucial. A stronger international legal order reduces the chances of conflict and is vital for the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations is crystal-clear to that effect and gives concrete options. It is encouraging to see that these peaceful settlement mechanisms are being used more and more often. Let me give two examples.

The Netherlands strongly supports the United Nations as a global actor in the field of mediation, including through our substantial funding for the Department of Political Affairs, and Jeff Feltman this morning said important words to that effect.

When it comes to the judicial settlement of conflicts, the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, both housed in the Peace Palace, are global symbols of the pursuit of peace by means of law. Last year we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Peace Palace, and The Hague, as we know, has been labelled the legal capital of the world.

Another crucial element of prevention is early warning of conflicts. My Government highly values the initiative of the United Nations under the "Rights up front" action plan, which is very closely linked to the very important concept of the responsibility to protect, which we wholeheartedly support. The United Nations has clearly demonstrated the close link between peace, development and human rights. Human rights violations function as an early-warning signal of potential conflicts, and the Security Council should act accordingly. We believe, and I would like to echo my New Zealand colleague in saying, that there should be better interaction between the countries on the Council and those that are not on the Council — that there is room for improvement.

When conflicts do occur, the United Nations must make sure, and let me here echo Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, that we have the reporting and that we have the type of people who can do the work on the ground on human rights and on the political side.

Mr. President, accurate reporting by the United Nations is crucial to accountability and reconciliation, as you mentioned in the concept note (S/2014/30, annex). I would like also to reiterate that accountability is a condition for durable reconciliation and peace. Mass atrocities and international crimes should never go unpunished, regardless of whom the perpetrator is. A direct link exists between prevention, protection and prosecution, as my Minister, Mr. Timmermans, made clear during the 10-year celebration of the International Criminal Court. Prosecution also has a crucial preventative effect.

Mr. President, as you stated, the narrative of a conflict is important for reconciliation and resolution. It is crucial that objective data and proof be conserved, both during and after conflicts. The Netherlands, by hosting and funding the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, is doing exactly that in the case of the current Syria crisis.

The conservation of the records of the international tribunals is equally important, as a point of reference for the origins of past wrongs and future reconciliation. The Dutch National Archives serve as the depository for the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

As our colleague from Namibia said, in all phases of conflict, before, during or after, the position of women deserves specific attention. Women are crucial to the prevention of conflicts, to protection during conflicts and to reconciliation after conflicts. Therefore my Government has worked closely with UN-Women in recent months so as to have a group of Syrian women invited to Geneva and to New York. We thank the Security Council for having received them.

Allow me to conclude by reminding all of us that the tools for lasting peace exist. The burden is upon us to use them effectively. May our work be guided by the wise words of Baruch Spinoza, who said, "Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, for confidence, for justice".

Let us work towards a world in which we are partners in bringing about peace, justice and development. It is the ambition of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to be a partner in that endeavour.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): At the outset, let me welcome the timely initiative of devoting this thematic debate to such a sensitive, complex and often painful but extremely important topic.

Allow me to start with some facts and questions. Several estimates suggest that there have been only 250 years of peace over the 3,400 years of the documented history of humankind — and those are optimistic estimates. The twentieth century was the most murderous in recorded history. The total number of deaths caused by or associated with its wars has been estimated at 187 million, the equivalent of more than 10 per cent of the world's population in 1913. Is our planet a safer place today, 100 years on from the outbreak of the First World War and 70 years from the end of the Second?

We spent more than $13.4 billion on humanitarian relief in 2013 alone, and expect approximately the same amount to be allocated this year. Are we not paying a price for the inconsistencies in our approach to the processes of building sustainable societies and peace in post-conflict areas?

War is like an avalanche: once it picks up its full speed, it overcomes everything in its path and leaves behind only destruction, death and suffering. But the most important thing may not be to keep looking for the snowflake that caused the avalanche, but rather to seek to learn how to prevent it, tame it and create a better, sustainable peace on the ruins it leaves behind.

To find answers for the future, we should find the courage to look into the past. That may be the most difficult part — how to handle the injustices of the past without creating new injustices in the present and future. We have to have the strength to look directly into the cruel face of war and its consequences. We cannot hide from them.

It has been said that time may fix all of the injustices of the past. But yet again, treating a wound may be relatively fast, but a cure requires dealing with the scars in the memories and the minds of people, which is much more difficult. Reconciliation may take decades or generations, and may always maintain the potential for conflict, but it cannot be achieved without individual accountability.

Tolstoy's classic novel, *War and Peace*, indicates that history is not, after all, produced by the dramatic moves and posturing of leaders, but by complex combinations of large numbers of small actions by relatively unimportant people.

Allow me to share with the Council three observations. First, reconciliation is a sign of strength, not of weakness. The Franco-German reconciliation — the understanding of European nations that war can no longer be an instrument for the implementation of policy — brought the perspective of a longer, more durable peace, at least in Europe.

Herman van Rompuy said that Europeans did not wish for anybody else, in any region in the world, to have to endure such traumas as the First and Second World Wars in order to reach the conclusion that living peacefully together is by far the best option. Of course, peace might have come to our continent without the European Union — maybe. We will never know. But it would not have been of the same quality — a lasting peace, not a frosty ceasefire.

The second point I would like to make is that regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are the cornerstones of stability. The project of European cooperation can be an inspirational example. It may not necessarily be a universal model, but it has been working for more than 50 years. It shows that national security can be sustainable only if there is regional stability and cooperation, if neighbours want and are able to coexist and cooperate without prejudices and if they are able to join their efforts for the sake of the common interest and face challenges together. Without those foundations, progress cannot be sustainable.

Thirdly, I turn to the individual security of persons, which enables them to live in dignity and freedom. When people have basic rights and freedoms, enjoy free movement, live in mutual tolerance, have access to education and enjoy economic activities, then they might be much more reluctant to start a conflict that might deprive them of all of those freedoms.

To build a sustainable future and peace in post-conflict areas, we have to develop a comprehensive approach, with the participation of all parts of society. Slovakia has for several years been a strong supporter of security sector reform. The need for security sector reform is omnipresent, especially in post-conflict, war-stricken countries. The concept of security sector reform is rather complex and goes beyond the traditional understanding of post-conflict stabilization in the security field alone. It is also a political process that should be State-owned and State-led. Inclusivity and justice within society, as broadly based as possible, will ensure its sustainability. Security sector reform should go beyond narrow and simplistic definitions and reflect the experience, both good and bad, that the United Nations has acquired over decades of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The main goal is to establish the four dimensions of security, namely, the civic, the legal, the social and the economic. If we succeed in doing that, then we can significantly decrease the risk of a relapse into conflict.

Every human being is born free, has his or her dignity and is entitled to enjoy the right to live in peace. That is why we should not only take arms away from those who are fighting, but we should give them the prospect of a decent life by providing stability, security, education and sustainable peace.

Where, if not in the United Nations, do we have the capacity to do so?

In conclusion, yes, we must learn from the past, we must understand the roots of conflicts and we must be strong enough to overcome differences. We must to do so if we want to live up to the challenges of the twenty-first century and prove that our civilization can take care of itself and of our planet — the only one we have.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January and for having organized this important debate. It is indeed good to see you presiding over this meeting. This debate is important to the Security Council, which is itself a creation of the aftermath of a major world war.

You, Sir, have invited Member States to reflect on the deeper causes of war and the search for a permanent peace. This debate is even more timely in a changing international system characterized by rising levels of international economic interdependence and environmental scarcity, as well as political and inter-State tensions. Those challenges raise the likelihood of more complex transnational conflicts and call for a paradigm shift from the traditional conflict-mitigation models and war-prevention tools.

Seventy years on from the creation of the United Nations, a large percentage of the budget of the Organization is still spent on peacekeeping. That is due to endemic wars, even as more urgent needs for human development abound. Looking back at modern history, we see that, since the dark era of the transatlantic slave trade, which itself resulted in a civil war, through colonialism, the two World Wars and the Cold War era, war has been a permanent spectre and feature of human history. The only difference has been the immediate causes, nature and intensity of the various wars. The common thread is, however, that conflict occurs in human society owing to structural inequalities and social divisions, some of which are historic, religious, cultural, sociopolitical or economic in nature, including unresolved issues or memories of past conflicts.

While diplomats, civil society actors and politicians grapple with conflict mediation, resolution and peacebuilding, scholars on the other hand are trying to make progress towards the development of more sophisticated and perhaps more useful theories on the causes and prevention of war. However, the deep-seated structural causes of conflict in human society remain. Today's modern means of information and communication technologies, especially television and the Internet, make economic, social and cultural inequalities and abuses obvious to everyone, be they citizens of rich countries or those in the developing world. That often gives rise to both inter-State and intra-State tensions.

The international system and its institutions are characterized by inherent structural deficiencies that, at times, perpetuate or generate conflict, instead of promoting an equitable, economic and social environmental balance that could nurture peace. From the Security Council to the World Trade Organization to the Bretton Woods institutions, just to mention a few, policies and structures are skewed in favour of the most powerful countries and the interests they support. Those inequalities within and among the various countries continue to grow significantly, owing to imbalances in the international system. In its 2007 *Annual Report*, the International Monetary Fund recognized the close connection between an inadequately managed process of globalization, on the one hand, and the world's great inequalities, on the other. However, not much in terms of reform has been carried out, and the world continues to reel from one economic crisis to another, with the spectre of war ever present.

In the international criminal justice system, the International Criminal Court is an important and integral part of the international multilateral system. It is important because fighting impunity and promoting justice must be an integral part of the search for a permanent peace. Among the main causes of the recurrence of violence and war are the perpetuation of impunity and the lack of a credible justice system, at both the national and the international levels. But for the international criminal justice system to realize its full potential to contribute to lasting peace, it must meet the following three conditions.

First, there must be a balance between the pursuit of punitive justice and the pursuit of restorative justice in the framework of conflict resolution, within and among nations and nationals.

Secondly, it must reflect deeply on the multiplicity of justice and cultural systems and practices all over the world. It cannot, and indeed must not, appear to favour some while neglecting or side-stepping others.

Thirdly, it must be fair, transparent and equitable in its involvement of the States and people of the world, not only as beneficiaries of the system but as actors in it.

A world that condones impunity will never find lasting peace, but neither will a world that manipulates justice and its institutions to promote outcomes that favour the powerful, and thus undermine a permanent peace.

Africa continues to play host to a large number of global hot spots and peacekeepers to deal with them. That is due, in large measure, to structural deficiencies in the continent, including weak institutions and poor governance. The Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions, which are the epicentres of the current intense conflagrations in the continent, are endowed with vast mineral and natural resources, yet ironically characterized by some of the most intractable wars, dating back to the colonial and Cold War eras. It is my sincere hope that today's debate can shed some light on the root causes of those conflicts and the links among war, weak institutions and vast mineral and natural resources.

Let me now turn to the Kenyan experience, which I believe has lessons, especially for countries trying to consolidate peace after conflict. Kenya held peaceful, fair and free elections in March 2013, much to the bewilderment of many pundits who had predicted a recurrence of the violence witnessed in 2007. From 2008 to 2013, the Government of Kenya, with the support of the Kenyan people, civil society, the media and international partners, embarked upon a broad range of fundamental constitutional and institutional reforms that culminated with the promulgation of a new transformative Constitution in 2010. Among the institutions reformed were the judiciary, the Electoral Commission and the National Police Service Commission. Various commissions, such as the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, were formed to help heal the country and strengthen the social fabric.

The Kenyan example reveals how investment in non-coercive measures, such as institutional strengthening, bolstering the rule of law and combating hate speech, can help prevent atrocities when reforms are undertaken early, with sufficient resources and with international support. The role of subregional and regional economic communities in assisting countries to consolidate peace and economic recovery cannot be gainsaid. Those regional bodies are the anchors of the international system in the search for permanent peace. That explains the maxim in peacebuilding, supported by many African countries, that initiatives must be nationally owned, regionally anchored and internationally supported.

A reflection on the causes of war and the search for permanent peace are incomplete without focusing on the inherent threats that lead to conflict. As I mentioned earlier, the concerns of national and international security have evolved significantly since the days of the Cold War. While States are still concerned with traditional threats, such as military hostility from other States, today's threats to our security are much more interconnected. Transnational security threats constitute a greater threat to political stability than traditional State-based military threats. In recent times, transnational security threats have caused serious damage to economic, social and political development at the national and regional levels and, as we have seen, also at the global level.

Furthermore, in the search for permanent peace, the international community should also focus on stabilizing post-conflict societies and facilitating reconstruction and development, while addressing the transnational challenges that often emerge subtly, over a long period of time. The landscape of security and insecurity is vastly complex, and analyses and policies aimed at improving security must be grounded in the internal and external realities of each State. The primary challenge of analysing transnational security threats is determining which ones are the most critical to national and international security.

In conclusion, I would like to state that, in order to improve our search for permanent peace, we realize that today's threats are interconnected and must be addressed jointly at the global level. The starting point must be with the long-standing need to reform the international institutions entrusted with ensuring international peace and security, including the Security Council and those created to promote equitable economic, social and environmental balance, while fighting poverty and inequality.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the presidency of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for organizing today's open debate and for the concept paper (S/2014/30, annex), which provides us with insights into the United Nations experience when it comes to meaningful reconciliation and the strengthening of peace.

Today, we should reflect not only on the achievements of the United Nations since its inception, but even more on the shortcomings, as they are the true lessons that need to be learned. Every particular case of war has its own peculiarities, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Nevertheless, they share some common features that we need to identify, analyse and use in our approach.

To that end, allow me first to share with the Council the experience from the conflict in my country, Georgia, which has been subject to aggression and, as a result, waves of refugees and internally displaced persons, totalling over 400,000 in 2008, when the full-scale war was followed by the occupation of 20 per cent of my nation. The ceasefire agreement brokered by the European Union in August 2008 remains unimplemented today, as international monitors are not given access to the occupied territories; hence, the war-divided communities there are denied basic human rights and freedoms.

Since January 2013, Russian occupation forces have begun large-scale installation of barbed wire and fences along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali region of my country. As of today, the total length of barbed wire along the Tskhinvali occupation line has reached 50 kilometres, and the installation process is ongoing. Very recently, in the run-up to the Olympics, the Russian Federation expanded the so-called security zone 11 kilometres deeper into Georgia's sovereign territory, south of the Psou River where the international border between Georgia and Russia lies, in violation of international law and the provisions of the August 2008 ceasefire agreement. The Games were further politicized through the promotion of the so-called independent status of Abkhazia, when the Russian transport authorities granted permits to 500 "Abkhazian" vehicles, implying thereby the independent status of that occupied region of Georgia.

Without going into further details of a long chain of events pertaining to the matters mentioned previously, let me draw the Council's attention to some of the lessons learned from our experience. First, peacekeeper impartiality is key to solving conflicts like ours. In Georgia's case, for 15 years peacekeeping functions were exercised by a State that not only had a vested interest in maintaining the conflict but in fact was also the party to it. Eventually, that lead to a preposterous development when, in the aftermath of a full-scale war, the United Nations left the conflict-affected area at a time when its presence was needed most. In spring 2009, the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia was vetoed by a Security Council member, notwithstanding the fact that the host nation, Georgia, and the entire international community, pleaded for its extension. Thus, in 2009 a dangerous precedent in the history of the United Nations was set when a 15 year-old mission was terminated by the veto of just one member of the Security Council. Today, as the years have passed and we see the void where no one is allowed to monitor the violations of human rights, we believe that there is even greater need for all of us to embark on a wider discussion of the appropriateness of exercising the right of veto with regard to conflict-affected areas so that cases like Georgia's can be avoided in the future.

Secondly, let me stress the importance of an efficient negotiating format. It took more than a decade and, unfortunately, a full-scale war for the wider international community to engage and set up a truly international negotiating format in which a deal could be honestly brokered. Today, Georgia and Russia are participating in the Geneva international discussions, mediated by the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union. The war could have been avoided had such a mechanism existed earlier. Maintaining those negotiations, together with operational mechanisms, is vital to creating an environment conducive to long-term conflict settlement.

Thirdly, I would like to highlight the importance of the timely engagement of international and regional organizations. A relevant toolkit should be developed at all levels to respond when early warning mechanisms for conflict prevention and crisis management are triggered. The timely use and implementation of such mechanisms can largely facilitate the peace process.

The foregoing are some of the lessons the international community could learn from our case. We fully realize that long-term conflict resolution is a comprehensive process that requires political will and dedicated effort on behalf of all parties. Georgia remains committed to that goal. Obviously, we all need to redouble our efforts to embrace the best practices that can guide us as we strive to achieve lasting peace and sustainable security. In that context, we also welcome the Jordanian initiative to mandate a United Nations historical advisory team.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): I am grateful, Mr. President, that you have chosen a topic that touches upon a fundamental aspect of international peace and security. It also prompts our intellectual and academic curiosity.

The current situations in Syria, South Sudan and the Central African Republic are a clear indication of the crucial importance of national reconciliation to the achievement of permanent peace. As shown in the aforementioned cases, the situation on the ground in each country is different, requiring deep understanding of all the characteristics particular to each case so that we should deliberate on a case by case basis. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

The reality of today's world shows that reconciliation is not an easy task. I therefore believe that it would not be practical to discuss the issue in the abstract. In dealing with such an important issue, we need the wisdom of all Member States, and the Security Council, with only 15 members, may not be the best place. What the United Nations and the international community can do in practical and concrete terms to build an environment that encourages reconciliation should be something that the whole membership should address.

Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of the Second World War. During a certain period in the past, Japan caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly those of Asian nations. The Government of Japan, squarely facing those historical facts, has expressed its feelings of deep remorse and sincere mourning for all victims of the Second World War, both at home and abroad, and voiced its heartfelt apology. The entire position outlined by previous Administrations is maintained by the current Cabinet.

Peace, democracy and human rights constitute an important part of the Japanese people's identity. Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has continued to pursue the path of a peaceful country and it will never change from that course. That point has been highlighted in the national security strategy that was approved by Cabinet decision in December 2013. It is therefore a pity that specific issues involving Japan and some neighbouring countries have been raised recently and during today's open debate. Japan does not believe that such actions are helpful in reducing tensions and enhancing stability in the region. Although Japan doubts that the Security Council is the most appropriate forum for dealing with those specific issues, let me clarify our positions on the three issues that were raised by some delegations today.

First, with regard to the Yasukuni Shrine, the Shrine is home to approximately 2.5 million souls who, regardless of their rank, social standing or nationality, made the ultimate sacrifice for their nation, not just in the Second World War but also during domestic turmoil and other wars since 1853. In the statement entitled "Pledge for everlasting peace", which Prime Minister Abe issued upon his visit to the Shrine, he underlined that the purpose of his visit was to renew the pledge that Japan shall never again wage war. It was by no means to pay homage to Class A war criminals or to praise militarism.

Secondly, we are deeply pained to think of the comfort women who experienced immeasurable pain and suffering. Japan has extended its sincere apologies and remorse to all those women on various occasions. We established the Asian Women's Fund in the 1990s to offer atonement to former comfort women. At this juncture, Japan's position is that this issue should not be politicized or be turned into a diplomatic issue. Throughout history, women's dignity and basic human rights have often been infringed upon during the many wars of the past. The Government of Japan attaches paramount importance to women's dignity and basic human rights and is committed to doing its utmost to ensure that the twenty-first century is free from further such violations.

Thirdly, Japan has recently revised the commentary of the courses of study for junior high school and high school, solely from an educational point of view. We have done so because, like other countries, Japan also considers it natural to teach its own children about the country's territory.

Japan has been manifesting its remorse regarding the war through concrete actions. Japan wishes to build a future-oriented and cooperative relationship with Asian nations, especially China and the Republic of Korea. Prime Minister Abe has stated that he wishes to build friendship with China and the Republic of Korea based on respect, and that he would strongly welcome direct dialogue with leaders from China and the Republic of Korea.

As a country that upholds such universal values as freedom, democracy, respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law, Japan has actively supported efforts towards democracy and national reconciliation in different countries, including those of Asia. One such action is Japan's support for democratization, reconciliation and economic development in Myanmar. Another important case is Sri Lanka, where Japan has actively engaged in national reconciliation and establishing lasting peace.

Another project is the initiative called Corridor for Peace and Prosperity, which was launched in July 2006. This is an initiative that is aimed at contributing to creating a viable Palestinian economy by promoting economic development in the Jordan valley in cooperation with Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians. Furthermore, during the recent second Geneva Conference on Syria, Japan announced its plan to extend additional assistance worth $120 million in total to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Those are concrete recent actions that Japan has taken to support democratization and national reconciliation. Japan will continue to be a peace-loving nation and contribute even more proactively to securing the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community, as a proactive contributor to peace and on the basis of the principle of international cooperation.

Let me finish my remarks by quoting Mr. Nelson Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa. Madiba said that reconciliation means working together with your enemy. What the international community and the United Nations should do is prepare the ground for such reconciliation. Japan stands ready to continue to proactively contribute to such endeavours together with the international community and the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Sarkowicz (Poland): At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating Jordan on its presidency of the Council in January and in thanking it for organizing this open debate.

While my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, I would also like to offer the following remarks.

It is very common to say that the nature of conflicts has changed since the end of the Cold War, but let us forget for a moment strategic and political analyses and be very clear about one thing — war, regardless of the reasons for which it is conducted, always brings death, suffering, fear and the doubt that people will ever actually get rid of evil. This is the perspective of civilians and the main lesson from war — one that we as diplomats and those who influence the decision-making process in our countries should never forget.

The twentieth century was not kind to my country. Poland suffered under 0world wars and two totalitarian regimes — nazism and communism. The results of the Second World War were indeed very tragic and bitter. We lost millions of citizens and our freedom. The following generations of Poles experienced poverty and recession and were deprived of their human rights and civil liberties.

It took us almost half a century to finally become a free and democratic country. Twenty-five years ago, Central and Eastern Europe's transition from communism to democracy began in my country. The round-table talks between the ruling party and the opposition led to elections that made it possible to form the first democratic Government. That triggered changes in the entire region, including the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Poland proved that such dramatic and enormous changes can be made through non-violent political means.

The democratic developments of 1989 also boosted the process of reconciliation with some of our neighbours. We believe that former foes can become friends and that divisions can be overcome. It took a lot of courage and compassion, and many generations have come and gone, but we succeeded. Poland and Germany, through small steps and intensive dialogue, have managed to build trust and security over the past decades. We are also engaged in a historical dialogue with Russia. We have established centres for dialogue and understanding and the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters.

Despite its hard lessons, Poland has never lost its European identity. Our future and opportunities for development have clearly been linked to European integration. Finally, rapprochement between nations, open borders and economic integration allowed us to build a permanent peace in our part of the continent.

Now, after 25 years of successful democratic changes and 10 years of presence in the European Union structures, Poland is sharing its experience with other nations — not only in our region, but also in North Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia. We have learned that only democracy and freedom make it possible to overcome the tragic legacy of war, but we also know well that democratic values cannot be imported or imposed. National ownership is indispensable to igniting the engine of change. We stand ready to assist democratic transitions in a spirit of solidarity and partnership.

Looking at the situations in Syria, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, we ask ourselves the question — if peace and reconciliation are possible between neighbours, why are they not always possible at home? We are all witness to these wars and conflicts. Every day we read reports of atrocities, see shocking images and hear the stories of the victims.

If those conflicts continue, what will the Middle East and Africa look like in the coming decades? What will future generations think of us? For those who have experienced war, it is not that hard to paint the picture. Our battle for dignity, freedom and human rights, including in the Council, is a continuous struggle. We should turn our words into action and find the courage to say "no" to war and seek the right methods to establish permanent peace.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Allow me, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Jordan's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Let me also welcome your initiative, Sir, which is very timely and on the right topic. We are convinced that this debate will meet with success under your able leadership. My delegation would also like to note the remarks made by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman.

It is 70 years since the end of the Second World War, which imposed unspeakable suffering and misfortune on humanity. With the end of the Second World War, the desire of humanity was to establish a world free of war and to achieve common prosperity and development for all people. Despite decade after decade having passed since that time, we cannot see any major breakthrough in achieving peace in the world. Instead, we are witnessing the challenges. In the world, large hotspots and the anachronistic and outdated military alliances of the cold war era continue to strengthen. Military alliances are still formed and large-scale military exercises continue to be launched one after the other, posing a greater threat to international peace and security. The act of interference in and infringement upon the sovereignty of other countries and attempts at regime change and armed invasion continue in an open manner under the pretext of so-called freedom, democracy, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. We can name all the pretexts.

That reality demonstrates that international peace and security is increasingly the primary issue of the world. In particular, global attention is focused on the trustworthy and responsible attitude and role of the United Nations in its mission to maintaining international peace and security. In that regard, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to underscore the following principles.

First, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is cognizant of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs as fundamental principles that should be strictly abided to in international relations with a view to achieving international peace and security. Whether a large or a small country, there is no aspect of international law that allows or tolerates infringement by a big Power on the interests and sovereignty of a small country. The Charter of the United Nations clearly stipulates sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs as fundamental principles to be upheld among States Members of the United Nations in international relations.

The acts of a specific State Member misusing its privileged status in the United Nations should no longer be tolerated. The acts of defying the Charter of the United Nations and considering itself more equal than others by making a show of its strength and attacking other Member States should no longer be tolerated.

I want to draw attention to a second principal issue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea insists that the United Nations should pay due attention to and make every effort with regard to the unresolved issue of crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War. As for past crimes committed by Japan against the people of Korea, China and South-East Asian countries, a precedent cannot be found in the history of humanity regarding the degree of savageness and brutality. It is a common issue. It does not concern only Asian countries but all humanity. Of the past crimes committed by Japan, the main unresolved crime is sexual slavery, in particular that imposed on 200,000 Korean women by soldiers of the Japanese Imperial Army. It is becoming an increasingly wide-ranging issue throughout the world with growing outrage at and condemnation of crimes that trampled on the dignity of Korean women and of the Korean nation as a whole.

The reality is that Japan is now hell-bent on denying and covering up its past crimes. Recently, it went as far as to commit a further error by stabbing at the wounded hearts of the victims and their States. The most representative example is the visit to the Yasukuni shrine by Mr. Abe, Prime Minister of Japan. That visit is a totally anachronistic crime intended to prompt the Japanese people to revive their militarist ambition and to incite them to commit another crime against humanity, thereby deluding the entire Japanese territory and population towards its own total destruction.

The Asian countries and the international community did not hesitate to voice their outrage at and condemnation of the visit. A State Member of the United Nations that has a close alliance with Japan did not hesitate to adopt a resolution on the sexual slavery of Korean women, as well as those of other Asian and European countries.

All those facts indicate that Japan is being driven into the role of offender. Mr. Abe should never gamble politically against the international community again. Instead of visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, he should visit Germany. That way he could at least learn about the best example of past crimes being settled in an excellent manner. That is in the best interests of Japan. It is the only way to shake off the inferior morality that is unique to Japan, and thereby restore the international community's confidence in Japan.

There is no place for Japan's militarism in this world. With regard to the Korean people, during the military occupation Japan massacred 1 million Koreans and, as I have told the Council in the past, they turned 200,000 Korean women into sex slaves, which is out of an estimated total of 300,000 women sex slaves under the euphemism of so-called comfort women. Furthermore, they abducted or drafted over 8.4 million Koreans and put them into forced labour sites during the Second World War.

The Korean people will never forget, no matter how much time and how many decades pass by. Without fail, the people will be repaid for what Japan has done to provoke the anger of our ancestors.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Today's discussion deals with an essential aspect of long-term reconciliation and thus, ultimately, of conflict prevention, which puts it squarely within the competence not only of this body, but also of other United Nations bodies. The Human Rights Council in particular has done related work, through its resolutions on the right to the truth. Indeed, it has created a mandate for the promotion of truth and justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

There is no doubt that the way we deal with the past has a significant impact on how we shape the future. It has been said that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. But the question before us is a more complex one. How do we make sure that there is a history to learn from in the first place — a common narrative that brings together those who have engaged in a conflict? We are confronted time and again with the difficulty of creating such a common narrative.

One prominent example is the outbreak of the First World War, the seminal catastrophic event of the twentieth century ,which you, Mr. President, mentioned in your remarks this morning. The 100th commemoration of its outbreak this year has already led to an enormous production of research, articles, books and analysis and also to the conclusion by all of us that, after a full century and enormous resources and brainpower dedicated to the topic, we are still lacking a common narrative on an event that has had far-reaching consequences that are still with us today. A full century certainly is a very long time, but we have seen conflicts where historic events from several centuries ago have played a role, sometimes a critical one, in the rhetoric and dynamic leading to the outbreak of hostilities or the inability to settle a conflict.

Reconciliation certainly is an essential element of ensuring that a peace agreement leads to more than the mere absence of armed conflict — or, to use your words, Sir, to a permanent peace. Peace agreements should always contain mechanisms that allow for the necessary reconciliation efforts among the conflict parties, where necessary with outside help. Such mechanisms should be part and parcel of any peacebuilding effort. Those efforts usually require a long-term commitment; they always require time. Establishing a common narrative can be a complex, painful and time-consuming undertaking. Promoting such a narrative and ensuring that it is processed and embraced can be the work of generations.

History is written by humans and, as such, is the product of interpretation and judgements of individuals. It can therefore be argued, of course, that there is no such thing as "the truth", but rather that truth is an agreement on the interpretation of and the way of giving meaning to historical events and facts. Only a historical narrative agreed to by those who have been on opposing sides in a conflict can therefore serve the purpose of reconciliation and creating and ensuring a permanent peace. Competing historical narratives can have quite the opposite effect, and in fact be an important factor in the recurrence of conflict.

One element of establishing such a joint narrative is individual criminal accountability in conflict situations where the most serious crimes under international law have been committed. In ensuring that there is no impunity for such crimes, we achieve two goals. First, there can be no closure for those involved in a conflict — as victims or as participants — unless those who bear the largest share of responsibility for such crimes are brought to account. An international consensus has therefore emerged that there can be no amnesty for those most serious crimes. Secondly, there is no way a community traumatized by such events can move on unless the story of what actually happened has been told. So, for the victims of the genocide in Srebrenica, it is as essential that those who have criminal responsibility for that crime be held accountable at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as it is that the story of the actual events, immensely painful as they are, be told.

The Security Council has slowly and somewhat reluctantly played a role in that respect, while only a limited one. The International Criminal Court (ICC) and the role the Council can play under its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, give the Council the opportunity to engage consistently and effectively in the effort to ensure accountability. But in most cases so far, it has passed on that opportunity.

Perhaps the starkest illustration of that fact is the refusal of the Council to engage in a meaningful discussion of accountability for the crimes committed in Syria some three years into the conflict. Even though a very significant number of States have formally asked the Council to make use of its competence to refer the situation to the ICC, it has not responded either by doing so or by discussing alternative accountability options.

If individual criminal accountability is key, it is in many cases not enough in and of itself. In particular, it will not automatically lead to the creation of a historical narrative that is embraced by all parties to a conflict. A joint effort by those who were divided in conflict to establish the facts, to ensure that the story is told, to create that narrative is perhaps a more important component in bringing the conflict to a solid end and creating a permanent peace.

Often, such efforts take the form of truth and reconciliation commissions. There are in fact examples where the work of such commissions alone has been very successful in bringing societies together, most prominently perhaps in South Africa. This is also an area where the United Nations can make a meaningful contribution and has done so many times in the past in Guatemala, El Salvador and Timor-Leste. The United Nations can assist by offering the expertise and experience it has, but the key element of success will always be ownership by the parties — the willingness not only to participate in such an effort, but also to promote the joint narrative, to educate future generations and to make sure that the narrative is embraced.

The most important lesson we have to draw collectively from war is one that is reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, repeated many times since and stated many times before — that war is evil, that it is a scourge and that it creates incredible suffering, in particular among those who have no guilt and bear no responsibility. The United Nations has been a very successful Organization both in ending conflicts and in creating peace, but we are as far as ever from our goal of preventing armed conflict as such. An essential element in this respect is outlawing war. While the Charter achieved that goal, it did not create criminal responsibility for individuals who violate this law. This gap can be filled by all of us now by giving the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, and all States can contribute to this goal by ratifying the Kampala amendments to this effect.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sao Tome and Principe.

Mr. Toriello (Sao Tome and Principe): Mr. President, let me congratulate your delegation on having organized this important debate, and allow me to go straight to the point.

What can be said about war that has not already been said by eminent and prominent personalities throughout human history? Therefore, I do not see much left to say about it, and I do not see what I could say about war that has not already been said by other, much more expert speakers here.

For that reason, allow me, then, to express my modest opinion by respectfully saying that war is something about which we must do a great deal, not just lecture. War must be eradicated by finding definitive and immediate solutions aime at putting an end to it once and for all. Otherwise, how we can define the human species as "homo sapiens"? Sapient in what way? About annihilating ourselves because of our greed for power and other selfish reasons? About generating the thousands of other miseries that come with war?

Yes, surely we are sapient about all of the misery we are able to generate because of our lack of wisdom. But I wonder if we are indeed aware of what war has been doing to humanity since the dawn of history. Facts speak for themselves, and the facts prove that we human beings are not at all aware of what we are doing to ourselves; otherwise, we would not wage war.

Allow me, then, to highlight the fact that there is a huge difference between being "conscient", which means physically alert, and being "conscious", which means being morally responsible for the actions we men perpetrate — if not to say that man, by his conduct, places himself at the lowest level of the evolutionary scale of life. That is not my statement but a statement by scientists.

On that basis, and before it is pointed out that I am perhaps philosophizing and not in line with the theme, allow me once again to highlight the necessity of finding practical solutions besides the sometimes too-cautious talks which are part of diplomacy, a righteous part of it indeed — but they are not enough. We should not forget that, even as we are meeting to lecture or hold discussions, or for whatever good reason and with the best of intentions, thousands and thousands of people are continuing to die in the name of diplomacy. I may therefore be able to contribute a little to the discussion by modestly expressing my views on it. That may stimulate some reflection about our humanity, which is often forgotten in the name of diplomacy, which seems to be supporting materialistic achievements more than human spiritual growth and social wealth.

Although we all know that peace starts within an individual, regrettably the facts show that the nature of man is more prone, when confronted with differences, to employ violent, aggressive actions rather than choose peaceful solutions.

Thus this is the time to be very honest and ask ourselves: "Do men and Governments really wish to end wars, poverty and all kinds of misery?" If that is so, then why are we not able to translate into practice what we keep talking about here and there? Why do we let prevail all the speculation and types of exploitation which these negative events generate and which harm our social system? Why do we not make use of our science and knowledge to save and preserve life, instead of spurring wars by fabricating weapons of mass destruction?

In short, the facts show that it is all a game of power, speculation and interests. So I would ask, in such a scenario, what to do? As I prepare to relinquish the floor, let me reiterate that unless the world's leaders opt for the politics of essentiality, encompassing a more holistic vision of life, over politics of interest alone, conflicts and wars will continue to ravage the planet. The true nature of mankind, which is spiritual, will have to prevail over its predominantly materialistic vision, as the whole of man's life should not be ruled by financial dictates. That reflects an indisputable truth that shows the faults ingrained in our human systems of governance, which adopt schemes ruled by speculating legislations and based on a culture of tolerance, instead of being grounded in a balanced distribution of the world's resources and respectful confrontation more than tolerance.

This unbalanced distribution and tolerating mentality ends up, in the long run, generating hostility and conflicts rather than promoting peace and socioeconomic development. In truth, those should be the lessons of war.

I will conclude by saying that, as a person speaking in the name of many others like me, we do not dream of having a good car, a big house or a rich mundane life, although there is nothing wrong with longing for such things once we have established a peaceful and wealthy global societal system. Our dream is to end wars and to coexist in harmony in this very moment. Peace should therefore not remain just a cultural event or a diplomatic debate; it requires us to exercise our responsibility as sentient beings.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Moreno Zapata (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes this initiative of the presidency of the Security Council, held by the Permanent Representative of Jordan, on the maintenance of internmational peace and security, an issue of such extreme importance to the international community.

The Charter of the United Nations is the first international legal instrument to have enshrined the absolute prohibition of the use of war as a means of settling disputes among nations. The current non-compliance with it is a scourge that threatens peoples the world over and undermines the independence and sovereignty of nations.

The unilateral military actions undertaken by the major Powers and the initiatives of Governments whose ambitions include extra-territorial expansion represent a threat to international peace and security. The cases of Syria, the Middle East and Palestine are emblematic examples of the catastrophe the world is experiencing.

The notions of preventive war and the responsibility to protect have been used outside the framework of international law and with adverse effects on peaceful coexistence among nations. The Bolivarian Government has always promoted inclusive, democratic dialogue and sustainable solidarity in dealing with conflict, without undermining national capacities, which are key to a nation's sustainability.

Among the most shameful causes of war seen throughout world history have been colonialism and neocolonialism. The frantic search for resources to maintain empires had led to the plundering of peoples and their resources. Likewise, poverty resulting from inequitable political and economic systems has provided a breeding ground for internal and regional conflicts.

The United Nations has played a role in preserving international peace and resolving conflicts through peaceful means. However, in some cases it has been unable to impose penalties on the use of force, as evidenced by the Israeli occupying Power's aggression against the Palestinian people. In that regard, the Security Council has failed to resolve the situation, owing to the exercise of the right of veto by one of its permanent members. Moreover, in more than a few cases, the Council has precipitously imposed sanctions without exhausting all diplomatic mechanisms, thus worsening disputes and generating increased radicalization in the countries subjected to sanctions.

Civilians are the ones who truly experience the effects of war. In that respect, nothing is more lethal to international peace and security than validating the unspeakable acts of terrorists. Many extremists have directed attacks against hospitals, schools, religious sites and diplomatic facilities, attacks that have killed hundreds of innocent civilians. Such terrorist acts seek to replace a sovereign Government by imposing a new one, leading neither to peace or, even less likely, to lasting stability.

It should be recalled that the Security Council and the General Assembly decided to treat terrorism as a major threat to world peace. However, the war against terrorism has been dealt with through the use of double standards and attempts to differentiate good terrorism from bad terrorism, using arguments that go against nature and the principles of the United Nations.

Today, various methods of waging war exist worldwide. Some of the general doctrines include third-wave warfare, fourth-generation warfare, information warfare and asymmetric warfare, among others. Clearly, that list is neither exhaustive nor definitive.

Declared wars are well known and are devastating in their effects on people. But we must not forget covert wars, which are less visible and can go undetected. They remain lethal, leading to the destabilization of legitimate Governments, undermining sovereign power and threatening populations.

For example, the economic blockade against Cuba could be considered a covert war. It is an aggressive extraterritorial act that violates international law. In addition, economic sabotage, illicit arms trafficking, the use of drones, the media war and massive espionage efforts represent, inter alia, new methods of waging covert warfare.

There are no lessons to be gained from war, only consequences. That is why the Security Council should seek to end war in the world, through diplomatic solutions, mediation and dialogue aimed at resolving international conflicts, and work to guarantee the right to life of the world's peoples.

Finally, we note an encouraging event, namely, the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, currently taking place in Havana, where 33 dignitaries have sent a message to the world declaring Latin America and the Caribbean region a zone of peace, based on respect for the norms of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The proclamation issued at the meeting also establishes a lifelong commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, forever rejecting the threat or use of force. It clarifies that States bear the responsibility of non-intervention, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of other States and of observing the principles of sovereignty and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

Likewise, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States has committed itself to furthering nuclear disarmament and promoting a culture of peace through that proclamation, which will contribute to coexistence in a world of greater peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to speak before the Security Council. Allow me also to thank you, Sir, for your dedicated, committed and successful work during the month of January.

I also endorse the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union earlier today.

I join others in commending the initiative of the presidency in holding this open debate and in sharing its concerns regarding the durability of peace and the need to achieve more in the field of reconciliation, especially through the strengthening of capabilities that could support reconciliation processes, when such support is requested or needed. The United Nations has already achieved much in building such capabilities, including through efforts aimed at developing mediation processes.

Slovenia, as a Central European and Mediterranean nation and member of the European Union, has had the bitter experience of three wars in the past 100 years and would agree that reconciliation means finding a way of achieving a common life that enables a common vision of the future, the rebuilding of relationships and coming to terms with past acts and enemies. It is a society-wide, long-term process of deep cooperation and change. It is a process of acknowledging, remembering and learning from the past. It should take place spontaneously through the recognition of the benefits of cooperation, and it cannot be imposed. As we approach the one hundredth anniversary of the First World War, it is worth remembering that it took another world war before the European leaders took the courageous decision of linking the reconciliation process with European integration.

From that point of view, I would like to highlight three important messages related to the questions raised in the President's invitation to this debate (S/2014/30, annex). First, in order to avoid what is referred to as shallow peace, Slovenia — remembering the unspeakable, horrendous war of the 1990s in the

Balkans — is working on the Brdo process, which includes efforts to achieve reintegration by seeking to overcome economic, social and infrastructural weaknesses. Also, face-to-face contact among high-level dignitaries of the respective countries could contribute to positive results for all.

Secondly, the European Union has served as a positive example over the past six decades. We would strongly advise the development of further effective regional cooperation efforts aimed at every region in need of reconciliation and reconstruction. Neighbouring countries are usually the first to take an interest in a stable and prosperous environment.

A final point is that a successful reconciliation process depends on many factors. It requires democratic governance, respect for human rights for all and the rule of law. It demands that the perpetrators of the most serious crimes be brought to justice, including through the International Criminal Court, according to the principle of complementarity. And it entails promoting the value of peaceful coexistence through education and the engagement of youth and civil society.

We need to emphasize, however, that in order to achieve sustainable peace and stability, our work in conflict prevention, early warning and mediation has to be expanded. That is why Slovenia, in the framework of the initiative on mediation in the Mediterranean region, will organize a seminar on promoting a culture of mediation and prevention in the Mediterranean region, in the symbolic site of Brdo, Slovenia, on 11 March.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Montenegro.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): Permit me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption and conduct of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. I would like to thank you for organizing this important debate. Let me also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs for his briefing.

Montenegro fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would, however, like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Montenegro's long and proud history has been marked by numerous wars — two World Wars as well as two Balkan wars in the twentieth century alone. Even though it did not bring war directly to the soil of Montenegro, the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, in the 1990s, also saw war-like clashes that affected the whole region. As our history suggests, unfortunately, Montenegro has been no stranger to war. But it is important to stress here that Montenegro has strictly and solely fought freedom wars, never having any territorial or other ambitions and claims, notwithstanding the fact that war, especially in the Balkans, in the historical context, presumed that struggle for liberation implied changing border lines.

As a small country to which these various wars brought so much suffering, including of an existential nature in the aftermath of the First World War, Montenegro has been in a position to draw many lessons from those experience and, as a result, base its modern national strategic policy and orientation on the premises of peaceful solutions, relations and coexistence. History has taught Montenegro something that cannot be emphasized enough in the current and ever-fragile international peace and security context, that is, the best and only truly sustainable way to solve differences and rectify tensions and conflict situations is through peaceful means, in the spirit of dialogue, committed to diplomatic and political efforts and tools.

One of the main prerequisites in that sense is the need for the parties in conflict to show a willingness to accept painful compromises for the greater good. As bloody as the price of independence for some ex-Yugoslav was, Montenegro was able to regain its independence, in 2006, in a completely peaceful manner. The Montenegrin leadership at the time took some very difficult decisions, including the acceptance of threshold of a 55 per cent majority set under the facilitation of the European Union, which marked the first time such a threshold had been established and used. When combined with other aspects, such as the wisdom and sense of being patient at such a historic juncture and waiting for the right moment and conducive environment to hold a referendum, as well as to exercise an open and transparent approach with our counterparts, the end result was a separation between Serbia and Montenegro that came about peacefully, although it had had the potential to be violent.

It is in that framework that I would like to underline the significance of the United Nations early detection and early-warning mechanisms. Our focus should definitely be strengthened towards preventive measures in order to avert crises from developing and escalating, and to mitigate the possible repercussions of crises.

With that aim, as a member of the Group of Friends of Mediation, I would like to advocate that mediation truly be established as a core function of the United Nations, as prescribed in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations. As such a cost-effective tool for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict that has been largely under-utilized, mediation embodies one of the most important instruments at our disposal and rightfully deserves increased attention and resources of the United Nations system and United Nations membership as a whole.

The responsibility to protect and its further operationalization must also remain a priority. In an era of accountability, perpetrators of crimes against humanity should not go unpunished. Countries need to demonstrate strong commitment to the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, democracy and the non-use of force in settling disputes.

Montenegro's path to renewed statehood was a carefully crafted, step-by-step process. The road to a political solution is often long and exhausting, especially if it concerns crisis and violent situations. Sometimes the hardest step is to bring opposing parties to the negotiating table. In that context, I would like to highlight the positive and valuable role that regional and subregional organizations can play in facilitating the beginning of dialogue and a conciliatory tone, as we have seen recently in many instances in Africa. When regional or subregional approaches do not bear fruit, it is for the United Nations to step in and take ownership, as was done for the Syrian crisis, for which we commend the personal engagement and tireless efforts of the Secretary-General to take leadership and put his credibility and full weight behind organizing the second Geneva Conference on Syria.

The experience of the League of Nations after the First World War, followed by the nearly seven decades of the existence of the United Nations, even considering all of the weaknesses that have been seen along the way, point to the indispensable and vital role of such world organizations in the system of global governance — for ensuring global peace and security, development and respect for human rights and freedoms. In order to make sure that the United Nations maintains its rightful place as the central mechanism in global governance, the Organization has to take on a modern, reformed shape, one that recognizes new geopolitical realities and the world's evolving multifaceted conditions and environments.

Once the parties are brought together, it takes persistence, belief and serious commitment to the give-and-take process, which is carefully balanced and leaves no clear-cut winners or losers. It is only in that way that we can count on the sustainability of the outcomes reached and avoid relapse into crisis.

One crucial aspect that cannot be overlooked throughout the diplomatic process of searching for political solutions is the constructive and positive involvement of the relevant States and other stakeholders from the immediate and wider region, as well as global players who can use their influence over developments on the ground to help carve out the best possible resolution.

In conclusion, allow me to point out that the strategic priorities of Montenegro foreign policy are based on the pillars of developing good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, as well as developing bilateral and multilateral cooperation. For its pragmatic role that has no hidden agenda, and having no open issues with its neighbours, Montenegro has been recognized as the factor of stability in the region, fostering efforts for reconciliation and the promotion of overall regional cooperation.

Complementary to the irreplaceable undertakings of European and Euro-Atlantic structures, and efforts of countries in their respective integrations roads, all of Montenegro's activities are oriented towards the purpose of achieving permanent peace and prosperity in the region. Such a forward-looking attitude, geared towards the future, focusing on close cooperation for the benefit of all, working in the spirit of dialogue and compromise to overcome differences and at the same time ensuring that their peoples enjoy good living standards, is a recipe for success.

The best example is the European Union-facilitated landmark agreement between Serbia and Kosovo of April 2013, on the normalization of relations. The agreement marks a positive sign and will go a long way for both peoples — as well as for the whole region, which has had its share of turbulent times — as it will, hopefully, represent a shift away from harmful ideologies and ways of thinking towards peaceful and prosperous coexistence.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mrs. Miculescu (Romania): I thank you, Sir, for this timely debate and warmly congratulate you on your unsurprisingly excellent stewardship. Let me briefly touch upon the topic from our national perspective, which is in addition to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, with which Romania fully aligns itself.

In this debate reflecting on the lessons learned from war and means for building perpetual peace, the first inspiring example that comes to a Romanian's mind is that of our most distinguished diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu. Besides playing a major role for his country during and after the First World War, which we commemorate today and this year, he played a leading role in the creation of the League of Nations in 1921, later becoming its only twice-elected President in 1930 and 1931.

We think of him first because a constant in Titulescu's activity was his fight for the preservation of stable borders through the maintenance of peace, for good relations between both large and small neighbouring States, for the respect of the sovereignty and equality of all nations, for collective security and for the prevention of aggression. In the early 1930s, realizing the dangers to his own country as well as to other States in Europe, of the rising extremist ideologies, Titulescu undertook prolific activity in the field of regional integration by signing treaties of friendship and non-aggression with other nations, primarily conceived to prevent any relapse into old conflicts. Even today, those documents are seen as milestones of cooperation among the countries and nations of the Balkans.

Titulescu identified certain prerequisites for achieving sustainable peace that are still valid today. He said, first of all, that winners in war must forget their hatred and understand that all suffer because of war. Then, there is a need for all peoples to blend together, to see each other and to talk to each other about their common interests. Although primarily a reference to regional cooperation, this is a clear example of forward-thinking and a strong plea for the values that became the basis for the establishment of the United Nations.

In Titulescu's view, which has since then become Romania's view, the process of building sustainable peace needs to be based on a shared sense of security; to aim at achieving stability, while building mutual trust and knowledge among nations; and to include careful analysis of divergences and address them all. The accepted means for resolving conflicts must be only political and legal; the spirit of human solidarity must prevail over military strength.

Titulescu strongly believed, as we all do in the Council today, that war could never be a solution to a conflict. According to him, there are a number of targets to be achieved in the quest for a permanent peace, and they are as pertinent today as they were in the 1930s. They include international economic interdependence, the common fight against prejudices, education for peace, and coordinated action leading to the eradication of the economic causes of conflict. Referring to causes that provoke and amplify tension internationally — causes that are still the same nowadays — he advocated that the world does not need a revision of treaties but a revision of its own mindset. How true that is, even today.

Returning to the present time, Romania tries to follow the path opened by its illustrious diplomat. Our diplomacy constantly advocates, for instance, the advantages of regional cooperation, especially by building bridges of trust and pragmatic cooperation among neighbours. Therefore, we have been an active part of multiple cooperation formats in our region, such as the South-East European Cooperation Process, currently under Romanian chairmanship.

Convinced of the huge potential of regional cooperation, Romania made a substantive contribution during its previous term in the Security Council by promoting a resolution on the United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, within stabilizing and post-conflict reconstruction processes. Thus, resolution 1631 (2005), represents the first such document in the history of the United Nations dedicated to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. We continue to truly believe that such cooperation is one of the keys to building everlasting peace.

In a world scarred by inequality, intolerance, conflict and terror, Romania will always be by the Organization's side in its tenacious and admirable efforts to strengthen international peace and security, and we will always find inspiration in the wisdom of Nicolae Titulescu, who said that diplomats are soldiers of peace whose will contains only one word — "continue".

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): At the outset, I would like to warmly commend the Jordanian presidency of the Council for its initiative in proposing that issues relating to reconciliation should be the focus of today's open debate.

I align myself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

Over the century that we are marking today, the scourge of war was all too visible in many parts of the world and in many forms. How to eliminate that scourge and to build lasting peace is one of the great challenges facing our Organization. The United Nations has a vital role to play in helping societies damaged by conflict to rebuild and regenerate themselves. Through its peacebuilding interventions, it can help to transform a fragile peace into something more deep-rooted and lasting. It can lay the foundations, as few other organizations can, for permanent peace.

At the heart of that endeavour is the support the United Nations can provide for reconciliation between the communities of a divided society in the aftermath of conflict. It can help communities to bind up the wounds of conflict and to move, howsoever slowly and hesitantly, towards peaceful coexistence. The damage done to relationships at all levels by years of war and suffering is, of course, immense. It can take generations to overcome. There are legacies of profound mistrust. There are issues between communities in conflict that touch on deep sensitivities of identity and allegiance. Even if violence has ended, a lengthy healing process is needed before the rival communities can reach the level of confidence in each other that is required for a shared future.

On the island of Ireland, we have seen this at first hand. Fifteen years ago, a comprehensive political framework for the settlement of the Northern Ireland problem was agreed in a negotiation process which that the Irish and British Governments and the political representatives of Northern Ireland's communities. The achievement, the so-called Good Friday Agreement, transformed relations within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between Ireland and the United Kingdom. It has brought lasting political stability to Northern Ireland and an unprecedented level of cooperation and interaction between the two parts of Ireland.

At the grass-roots level, however, a significant challenge remains in terms of achieving lasting reconciliation between the two main traditions in Northern Ireland. Much painstaking effort has been devoted on all sides to that process. While significant progress has been made, a number of divisive issues remain. Those include issues such as the flying of flags linked to the respective communities or how contentious parades should be handled. Intensive efforts were made recently by a respected United States third party to broker an agreement between the communities on how those issues should be addressed.

Over the years, the Irish and British Governments have worked closely together on practical steps that might help the different traditions in Northern Ireland to deal with the past and to transcend the legacy of bitterness and misunderstanding. I salute here important initiatives taken by the British Government, such as the apology given by Prime Minister Cameron for the events of Bloody Sunday, to which the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom referred earlier in this meeting. Much valuable work is also under way at the community level to foster reconciliation and to increase mutual respect and acceptance of diversity.

At the international level, the United Nations is promoting similar objectives through a wide range of instruments available to it in dealing with the aftermath of conflict. Those include support for transitional justice and the rule of law, for political dialogue and mediation, for truth-telling processes, for reparations, for institutional reform, and for the role of women in the renewal and rebuilding of societies emerging from conflict. In such situations, the United Nations has the potential to deliver profound benefits, defusing tensions between communities at the local level through concrete actions that it supports and by thereby easing and accelerating the essential work of national reconciliation.

Reconciliation work assumes different forms in different contexts, whether at the national or community levels. There can be multiple benefits, furthermore, from individual steps taken. For example, the creation of a post-conflict system of justice can, on the one hand, serve accountability purposes in relation to egregious crimes committed during the conflict phase, while on the other it can help to restore the trust of individual citizens and to reconcile them to the new State.

Peacebuilding, with reconciliation at its core, is probably most effective if it is double-facing — a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future. While reconciliation needs to be context-specific and respond to the particular nature or dynamic of each transition or conflict, a more concerted effort is required to glean and share lessons and best practices from different conflict settings. Work also needs to be done on drawing together the various dimensions of reconciliation — including development, peacebuilding, human rights, security, the rule of law and governance — into a more integrated approach in which those various pillars would complement and reinforce each other.

To conclude, my delegation believes that this area of United Nations activity has not always received the attention it deserves. The actions being taken by the United Nations under various headings to promote reconciliation in post-conflict societies merit our full support. The Organization is making a vital contribution to the creation of "a truer, irreversible peace", as the concept paper circulated by the Jordanian presidency (S/2014/30, annex) puts it. There is much potential for developing that contribution, and Ireland looks forward to further reflection on the subject with other interested delegations. In that context, we wish to share the lessons we have learned from the Northern Ireland peace process, in the light of the continuing challenge of achieving lasting reconciliation among the differing traditions there, and also to draw on other examples of best practices from around the globe.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): Serbia aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union (EU). Speaking in my national capacity, I would like to make the following statement.

We have gathered together convinced that, in addressing security challenges, concerted efforts are needed by Governments, international organizations and individuals to counter the challenges, reach compromises, achieve reconciliation and ensure that, in the twenty-first century, no people pay the price of extremism as we strive to preserve what has been build upon the ruins of two world wars. The First World War left deep scars on the face of Europe and its nations. In its fight for independence, freedom and the idea of humanity, Serbia suffered a tremendous loss — 1.2 million Serbs died, almost a third of the country's population. Only Russia and France suffered more. Yet in terms of numbers of people, the toll Serbia paid in the Great War was higher than any other country.

Any isolated attempt at revising history is futile. We are proud to have fought with the Allies and achieved peace, opening the prospects for a just world based on different foundational principles and relations among nations, on greater respect for independence and sovereignty. The League of Nations, established in the wake of the Great War, was the first attempt to inaugurate multilateralism in international relations and bring about worldwide peace. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was in the front benches of the League.

Based on the lessons learned, the United Nations was created on the wave of the ideals that united the world in its fight against fascism in the Second World War. Since its inception, the United Nations has had as its goal the establishment and maintenance of stable peace and collective security based on agreements reached by consensus among nations. Over the decades, the United Nations has been instrumental in building the international security system, using its own experiences and lessons learned in the process. It could not have met the challenges before it and safeguarded international peace were it not for the joint efforts of its Member States, the shared setting of priorities and its guiding principle that all nations are equal.

The principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are the best foundations for establishing peace, respect for equality and honouring differences. Safeguarding peace and achieving justice in today's complex world is not a simple exercise. In that context, especially with regard to preserving the international order, the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, has a unique and irreplaceable role to play. Compliance with its resolutions is of paramount importance.

United Nations peacekeeping missions not only have a long history of keeping belligerents apart in many parts of the world, but also, equally important, they have been successful in promoting reconciliation, establishing the rule of law and laying down the foundations for long-term stability.

No society can expect to make progress unless it invests in eradicating poverty and inequality. Global stability is achievable only if we continue to invest, even at a time when resources are scarce, in education, health, sustainable economic development and the environment.

Serbia is committed to multilateralism, which is one of the pillars of its foreign policy, focusing on its role in multilateral and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We are confident that multilateral forums are the right framework for the development of democracy, stability and the achievement of lasting peace.

In recent decades, we have resumed our contribution to peacekeeping under the United Nations flag. Previously, Yugoslavia had been one of the first countries to take part as a military in United Nations peacekeeping operations, for example, in the United Nations Emergency Force in Sinai. At the moment, Serbia takes part in nine peacekeeping operations, seven within the United Nations and two within the European Union. We are ready to increase its participation in 2014.

The United Nations role as an honest broker has enjoyed universal trust. Serbia, too, has had positive experiences with the United Nations missions in Kosovo and Metohija.

Serbia believes that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which it will chair in 2015 on the basis of a joint two-year work plan with Switzerland, has a special role and place in the international security system and in helping to build democracy and lasting peace. The fact that Serbia had held two consecutive chairmanships indicates its high degree of confidence and openness to cooperate in dealing with the most important security issues in Europe today.

Regional cooperation is an important constituent part of contemporary multilateralism and, because it is particularly important for South-East Europe, it is one of Serbia's priorities. We are committed to intensifying cooperation, in view of the fact that we consider stability in South-East Europe to one of the basic preconditions for the development of our country.

We believe that the Balkans region is set to join the project of lasting peace that is embedded in the common European future. It is right to remind the Security Council that the European Union was created by stamping out age-old feuds and altercations and uniting positive energies that had dissipated for centuries. Confident that it is possible to bring prosperity to the entire Balkans region, Serbia has joined its neighbours and other peoples of Europe in the process of European integration. It is convinced that the process is of paramount importance. The first intergovernmental conference between Serbia and the European Union, which will open negotiations for its accession to the EU, is proof of Serbia's success on that road.

As a responsible member of the international community, Serbia upholds the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in its international and regional activities. It is our belief that activities within a multilateral framework help strengthen regional capacities and meet the challenges to lasting peace, stability and sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): I begin by thanking Jordan, which has assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January, for organizing today's open debate on the theme "War, its lessons and the search for permanent peace".

The founding of the United Nations was a reaction to the horrors of the Second Word War and an expression of the quest for permanent peace. That quest is ongoing as we debate how to achieve an international system that pushes war to the margins and invests in the pursuit of peace.

In the days following the First World War, Sigmund Freud concluded that war was inevitable because life could not move beyond its original aggression. Whether Freud was right or wrong is open to debate, but war has been, and continues to be, a ubiquitous feature of the human condition. Virtually all nations were formed by wars or violence and, in the course of their history, many have waged both defensive and offensive wars.

The frequency of wars and the casualties caused by it have not yet diminished. In fact, the 100 years after 1900 were without question the bloodiest in modern history and far more violent in relative as well as in absolute terms than any previous era. By any measure, the Second World War was the greatest man-made catastrophe of all time. To prevent the repetition of such catastrophes, the United Nations was established. That was a watershed moment in efforts to avoid the scourge of war and secure durable peace.

It is true that international relations following the creation of the United Nations have not been marked by ever-increasing violence. There have been no wars among the great Powers since 1945 and no recurrence of the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Once the epicentre and cauldron of international conflict, the European system is now settled and at peace. The end of the Cold War in 1991 also greatly reduced the possibility of conflicts between the great Powers. Still, in almost all fields of United Nations activities, new problems have emerged that keep challenging our imagination, our wisdom, our prudence and our commitment as we strive to find ways to ensure sustainable peace.

In the political field, we have seen that the use or threat of the use of force, which are prohibited by the Charter, have still not ceased sowing scepticism in the minds of ordinary people regarding the true effectiveness of the Organization. Although great wars have been avoided, much violence on the periphery of the international system and organized conflicts of all kinds — civil wars, genocides, governmental repression, third-party wars, power struggles and terrorist attacks — continue to destabilize many parts of the global South.

As the Secretary-General often mentions, one of the main reasons for such continued violence and instability is that the world is overinvesting in armaments and underfunding peace. The accumulation of excessive weapons and access to weapons create tension, encourage arms races and reinforce a sense of insecurity among all. More importantly, in a world of finite resources there is an inverse relationship between expenditures on armaments and economic and social development. The hundreds of billions of dollars and human, technical and technological resources spent annually on the manufacture, maintenance and improvement of weapons could be marshalled to tackle the challenges of poverty and hunger and enhance human dignity.

It is indeed imperative to find ways to reverse the waste of scarce resources dedicated to non-productive purposes and to channel the valuable resources thereby saved towards saving millions of lives, addressing pressing development needs and ensuring the timely achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. According to estimates, a total of $16 billion would be required to educate all people. Unfortunately, the global community cannot manage more than $2 billion to that end, while it has spent, as per the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, over $1,734 billion in 2012 alone for defence expenditures. It is therefore a question not of scarcity of resources but of priority and commitment. Are we ready to help humankind? If we fail to meet our responsibilities, future generations may not pardon us.

Obviously, wars are waged for many reasons, but in our times hatred, ideology, religion, intolerance, the illegal occupation of territory, territorial disputes, unfairness, aggression and competition for scarce resources are the primary sources of conflicts. Concrete strategies and renewed commitments are needed to resolve these issues. Bangladesh is one of the top troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping missions, and we believe that all violence and wars emanate from a mindset of intolerance, a mindset of hatred and misunderstanding, a mindset of aggressiveness.

Therefore, if we are to have sustainable peace and stability, we need to inculcate and promote a culture of peace. We need to promote a mindset of tolerance and a mindset of love and respect for others irrespective of race, colour, ethnicity or religion. The creation of such a live-and-let-live mindset that respects and accepts others' diversity will greatly help reduce violence and contribute to global peace and security. It is also equally important to solve many of the long-standing conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestine issue, which remains a catalyst for violence and instability in many parts of the world.

The world has undergone many transformations over the past few decades. There has been an increase in the number of democratic States and an ever-increasing interdependence in trade and other forms of peaceful interaction. The revolution in information and communications technologies, although largely beneficial to humankind, is also redefining the threats we face and the security environment. As the challenges of international security become increasingly complex and intertwined, we must learn to make multilateralism work to create a more secure world. To solve the problem of an interdependent world, mediation and negotiation should guide conflict resolutions.

It is also important to establish that force is an unwelcome and invariably and distinctly unprofitable means for the resolution of inter-State differences. It is similarly important to recognize that economic development should be the central object and legitimating element for Governments everywhere. Economic prosperity, the empowering of the powerless, a culture of peace and a live-and-let-live mindset would greatly facilitate sustainable peace, security and stability across nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Bonser (Canada): Let me start by commending you, Mr. President, for breaking the usual mould in convening this debate, which raises important questions about the role of justice, reconciliation and historical memory in achieving lasting peace.

This debate is also taking place at an opportune time. Over the past 20 years, we have witnessed a consolidation of democracies, both in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the western hemisphere, with major benefits for both regions. Since late 2010, we have seen populations throughout the Middle East express their desire for more freedom, more justice, more accountability and more transparency from their political leaders.

(*spoke in French*)

In Canada's view, that experience illustrates the need to recognize our collective human dignity. To live together in peace, we must recognize the fact that dignity cannot be made conditional or compartmentalized and that we cannot protect some human rights and freedoms and choose to not respect others. That recognition is the very foundation of thriving democratic societies. It reflects their determination to manage differences by fighting oppression and discrimination. It informs their commitment to respecting every individual's freedom of conscience, belief and worship. These values are at the very heart of Canada's principled foreign policy. That policy is dedicated to peace, prosperity, and freedom. Adopting such an approach entails several commitments.

(*spoke in English*)

Respecting human dignity demands a commitment to act. Canada is dedicated to preventing and halting genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Indeed, every State should have a solemn duty to defend the most vulnerable, challenge aggressors, protect human rights and promote human dignity, both at home and abroad. Societies that encourage respect for diversity, protect religious minorities, fight discrimination, hold perpetrators legally accountable, resolve political differences democratically and seek reconciliation are much less likely to suffer atrocities. Good governance, the rule of law and human rights matter.

The long history of humankind has shown that religious freedom and democratic freedom are inseparable. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has also often vanished. Societies that protect religious freedom are more likely to protect all other fundamental freedoms. They are typically more stable and prosperous societies. They are just societies.

It is essential that we not forget those most affected by conflict. A commitment to peace requires a commitment to the protection and empowerment of all members of a society, especially women and girls. A society's development is inextricably tied to the engagement and leadership of women. Peace cannot exist when the rights of half of the population are compromised. Peace cannot exist when the rights of women are compromised. Given access to resources, tools and opportunities, women are drivers of post-conflict reconciliation and recovery; when not, they are the greatest victims. A commitment to freedom and dignity requires the empowerment of all citizens. It is only by strengthening the rights of women that a country will achieve greater security and, in turn, greater prosperity.

Respecting human dignity demands a commitment to learning from the past. In 2013, Canada chaired the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, whose 31 member States are committed to the implementation of national and international policies and programmes in support of Holocaust education, remembrance and research. The Government of Canada believes that such work is critically important to helping to prevent future acts of genocide.

Canada has noted with great interest Jordan's emphasis on the importance of securing and making available the national archives of documents of States in order to address reconciliation in a post-conflict environment. Those archives can also play a role in holding to account those who have perpetrated the most serious crimes.

Canada notes that UNESCO has programmes dealing with the protection and preservation of national archives. Its Memory of the World programme, established in 1992, was born out of a growing awareness of the preservation of and access to documentary heritage to ensure that critical documents are not lost or destroyed during war and social upheaval. Perhaps one outcome of today's discussion might be the renewed attention of the international community to that work.

Finally, respecting human dignity requires a commitment to prevention. The United Nations system and its intergovernmental bodies have a long history of working together to prevent, contain and manage conflict. Canada supports strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in that area so as to move from reaction to prevention. Conflict prevention is as important as an effective response. Political, humanitarian, security and development resources and tools must be brought to bear more effectively in order to strengthen national capacities for conflict prevention. By doing that, we can preserve human dignity and protect the lives and rights of the innocent.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): First of all, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We wish to thank you and the entire delegation of Jordan for the excellent work done at the beginning of the year. With your permission, Sir, I shall also take this opportunity to convey the sincere congratulations of Armenia to the new members of the Security Council.

The theme of the debate is an issue that is at the very heart of the Organization. It is enshrined in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations and should therefore be more systematically integrated in the work of the Organization in order to prevent conflicts and to create more stable societies around the world. It is our strong conviction that solutions to conflicts should impartially and fully address the root causes of conflicts in order to prevent their resurgence in future. While acknowledging that all conflicts differ in their historical, legal and political background, we should bear in mind the positive experiences of recent examples of conflict resolution.

We completely agree with your review, Mr. President, reflected in this debate's concept paper (S/2014/30, annex), of the role of the United Nations in forging deeper reconciliation among peoples based on a shared narrative and memory of a troubled past. That process often entails more than simply adopting presidential statements and resolutions, visiting and laying flowers at victims' memorials or signing agreements or protocols and shaking hands. For it to be lasting, reconciliation may require the settling of the past and recognition and acceptance of the responsibility for the crimes committed.

Among the many lessons learned from our own tragedy — the Armenian genocide — we have unfortunately learned that the reconciliation process may be delayed for decades, or even generations. As the first modern genocide perpetrated under the cover of the First World War, it shows the extent to which humankind can degrade itself in the absence of an international system of security and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. There is nothing new in stating that ending impunity for heinous mass atrocity crimes is vital for restoring justice and normalcy. That is especially relevant to crimes and conflicts driven by extreme nationalism or ideologies. In 1939, just before the Nazi invasion of Poland, Adolf Hitler told his generals,

> "The aim of war is not to reach definite lines but to annihilate the enemy physically. It is by that means that we shall obtain the vital living space that we need. Who today still speaks of the massacre of the Armenians?"

We also learn from history that the scourge of war and crimes of genocide repeat themselves cyclically with frightening frequency in different parts of the world, resulting in an enormous loss of human lives and social, political and regional unrest. It is up to every society to address its past crimes, and my delegation believes that international institutions, world parliaments, human rights activists, political and religious leaders, historians, teachers and students, as well as other groups and individuals, also have a clear role to play in establishing the true and common historical narrative. As we noted when listening to members of the Council and the other previous speakers, one question that could be approached in this debate concerns the principles and instruments for seeking the truth.

Still, experience has shown in different parts of the world that for successful reconciled societies, nations usually undergo an extensive process of restoring justice, including reparations to victims and their heirs so as to re-establish their national dignity and identity.

It is also imperative to speak with one voice against the distortion of history, the denial of historical crimes and negationism. The legacy of past violence and human rights abuses must be addressed and a victim-centred approach is required.

With respect to lessons learned, we are certain that the prevention of conflicts and the development of sufficient early-warning mechanisms are among the most important tasks facing the international community. It is also our duty to continually convey a strong message of rejecting violence, de-escalating crisis situations and honouring previous commitments. In that respect, Armenia remains determined to continue its incessant search for durable peace exclusively through negotiations, the promotion of confidence-building measures and the development of good-neighbourly relations based on the recognition of people's rights and their self-determination in the volatile region of the South Caucasus.

For decades, the United Nations and regional organizations have been involved in post-conflict situations in which confidence-building has had to be addressed in order to overcome enmity and mistrust among those who must learn to live together again in the same neighbourhood side by side. Today's debate is an important step in that direction and we thank you, Mr, President, for this timely initiative.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Magbengu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the beginning of my statement today, to convey how pleased I am to see you, Mr. President, presidomh over this open debate of the Security Council and to say how much this agenda item, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security, is at the core of the goals for which the United Nations was established. On behalf of my delegation and myself personally, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your initiative to put this issue on the table for the Security Council's consideration during your presidency.

We believe that to best discuss this issue, the three aspects of prevention, crisis management and crisis settlement should be underscored. In 1945, following the San Francisco Conference, the peoples of the United Nations pledged to preserve future generations from the scourge of war, which twice in a lifetime has brought untold suffering to humankind. Since that time, war and the use of force were supposed to be banished from relations between States. That idea is the cornerstone of the Charter of the United Nations. Article 33 establishes the sacred principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, which prohibits all use of force as being incompatible with the goals of the United Nations, while Article 2, paragraph 4, establishes the principle of the prohibition of the use of force. As is clear, the Charter's premise is to establish an effective prevention principle that seeks to make war and the use of force violations of international law, contrary to the first steps taken in the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 of the now obsolete League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which simply limited the right of recourse to war, while recognizing its legitimacy as a means for settling international disputes.

If we were able to keep to the letter of the Charter, as it was envisioned by the drafters in 1945, the debate today might be much easier. Unfortunately, international practice has not always been faithful to that principle. The violence of those who consider themselves to be the strongest no longer obeys legal parameters, much less limits. We are witnessing global chaos, anarchy and an unleashing of violence, which are often disguised as the exercise of self-defence. However, once one goes outside the framework of self-defence and Security Council-approved actions, any use of force becomes illegitimate and is a threat to peace, be it a breach of peace or an act of aggression under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Those who analyse the Charter see in that disarray a rebirth of jus ad bellum in the form of bellum justum — a just war. They criticize the attitude of some Governments that appropriate the right to unilaterally decide to use force in circumstances other than legitimate self-defence when the Security Council is unable to take action.

Today, it is not war in the traditional sense of the word that threatens international peace and security. Challenges that the drafters of the Charter of the United Nations had not even thought of are present in our world now, such as the establishment of terrorist and criminal networks of drug traffickers and human traffickers, poachers and traffickers in endangered species, which fuel the cycle of corruption and the illegal use of natural resources, piracy and maritime trafficking.

The Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, also needs to be better structured so as to act decisively, not only to prevent conflicts and put an end to wars born of conflicts, but also to ensure that such conflicts do not re-emerge once peace has been built.

In that regard, experience has shown that the United Nations often has a hard time successfully maintaining and building peace. That explains the occasional re-emergence of conflicts after periods of calm. The management of the war in my country is a textbook case that should not be forgotten. After the democratic elections of 2006 and 2011, there was every reason to hope for lasting peace in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Strides were made with the success of joint military operations involving the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to reduce the risks to the security of civilians and to facilitate the handover of the security responsibilities to the Government.

However, it did not take much for operations such as the mixing, intermingling and integration of the former rebels into the regular army to lead to the reappearance of a culture of weapons and violence in the North Kivu. Former combatants of the former rebel movement of the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple, who had deserted the ranks of the Congolese army in the beginning of April 2012 and become members of the M-23, succeeded in turning their weapons against the regular army with the support of a neighbouring country, indeed a member of the Security Council, Rwanda.

We know that the United Nations is not a perfect Organization. That is in fact the merit of today's discussions, the goal of which is to think of new strategies to improve the situation in conflict areas. We have certainly all understood that the statement made this morning by the representative of Rwanda, who attacked the United Nations, was just subterfuge. His attack on the presence of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to be expected. And we know that the members of the Security Council were not fooled.

The United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is extremely irritating for Rwanda, our neighbour. In that regard, we all know the game that that trouble-maker country has played in the Great Lakes region, and the international community has grown accustomed to that. They move from one pretext to another. On 2 August 1998, when Rwandan armies were crossing the eastern borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, attacking and surrounding the various provinces in the east, in particular the North Kivu, South Kivu, Orientale, Equator and Bas-Congo provinces, it was under the pretext of ensuring Rwanda's own security. They were probably looking for the perpetual fugitives of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who apparently were everywhere, even in the trees and underground. The representative of Rwanda seems to have forgotten that, in May and June 2000, the armies of Rwanda and Uganda, both of which invaded the Democratic Republic of the Congo, clashed two more times in Kisangani, a Congolese mining town, in a battle for control of the diamond riches of the region.

In any case, given the new challenges, the Security Council must be inventive, break with business as usual and draw up new strategies, as was recently done with the establishment of the Intervention Brigade with a more robust mandate to bring security to civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, armed conflict, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions and small arms and light weapons, transnational organized crime, piracy, drugs and the trafficking in human beings are all emerging challenges. To better address those issues, the Security Council's structure must be readjusted. There is therefore a genuine and pressing need to make the Council more democratic, effective and transparent, and to guarantee equitable representation that would reflect the increase in United Nations membership from 50 members in 1946 to 192 in 2011.

Members of the Organization, individually and collectively, must ensure that the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its collective security system are firmly upheld so as to ensure that the world is more than ever free of the scourge of war.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, but let me make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

First, I wish to express my appreciation to the Jordanian presidency for convening this open debate on an issue of great importance to the United Nations and the Member States. The number of speakers today is a clear reflection of the interest in this issue. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-GeneralFeltman for his briefing. Indeed, avoiding war and historical tensions, maintaining peace and achieving reconciliation are fundamental objectives of the work of the United

Nations, so we welcome this opportunity to engage in a debate on this issue.

Peacebuilding efforts today pertain mostly to the development of a political, economic, security and institutional environment conducive to the establishment of lasting peace. But ensuring a favourable social environment is also key, as psychological and social factors will often directly affect efforts in other areas, from politics to security. Parties to a conflict may have divergent historical narratives and even selective memories that pollute the social, political and security environment, become an obstacle to reconciliation and contribute to relapse into conflict. In this context, along with developments in other areas, we must strive to reach a common historical narrative in order to provide local populations with a brighter, conflict- and war-free future.

The international community, the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations have a role to play in helping to forge conditions that enable reconciliation through the various instruments at their disposal, including mechanisms such as history, truth, inquiry commissions, panels and tribunals. But in this process, the following factors must always be borne in mind.

First, no two conflicts are alike. The requirements for reconciliation efforts will differ according to the conflict, as well as to political, social, economic, cultural and historical factors. While in some cases truth commissions may facilitate reconciliation, in others tribunals could be successful.

Secondly, ownership of the reconciliation process by the parties is a determining factor. Reconciliation cannot be forced and can be sustainable only with the consent of the parties. Reconciliation is a process for which local populations bear the primary responsibility. The international community and the United Nations must support local reconciliation efforts, but they should not attempt to act as a substitute. In this context, the United Nations is an important actor, possessing the legitimacy, capability and experience to assist by providing technical support mechanisms and agreements that are required as the bases of reconciliation processes. The United Nations and the international community should provide the necessary political, financial and logistical support for such mechanisms that can help achieve reconciliation in the pursuit of lasting peace.

Thirdly, parties should be enabled to meet on a common objective historical ground. The establishment of historical facts through scientific means, such as impartial and objective historical commissions that may be formed by the parties, or even with the participation of third parties, can be very useful to laying the common ground on which reconciliation can be built.

In this context, the proposals in the concept note of the Jordanian presidency (S/2014/30, annex) are noteworthy. The establishment of United Nations historical advisory teams to assist local authorities in securing documents and archives could be useful. Additionally, United Nations assistance in building local capacities for national archives or national historical commissions, where necessary, could also be beneficial. They would help to secure the necessary scientific data that could be critical in later stages on the way to establishing common, objective historical ground. Also, third parties often play an important role. They may hold key data in their archives. The United Nations could assist reconciliation processes by urging third parties to unconditionally provide the relevant mechanisms with the necessary information for an unbiased, objective and scientific account of the historical narrative.

Fourthly, although establishing historical facts may be important, reconciliation should focus on the future. It is essential to create an atmosphere that promotes understanding, tolerance and cooperation in order to achieve true reconciliation. Reconciliation must not be narrowed down to revisiting the past or used to revive old animosities. The establishment of a positive, forward-looking agenda will be more beneficial to creating a peaceful future in which communities can make a fresh start.

Fifthly, reconciliation does not mean impunity. In order to achieve true reconciliation, those responsible for the most serious crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes must be held accountable.

Sixthly, it must always be remembered that reconciliation is mostly a long-term and complex process. We must not give up efforts at the first sight of obstacles. On this note, let me pay tribute once again to the memory of the late President Nelson Mandela for his unrelenting efforts in pursuit of and success in achieving national reconciliation.

As we discuss and attempt to strengthen our capacities to better deal with post-conflict factors, we should not stop intensifying our efforts to prevent conflicts. We should also strengthen all instruments at our disposal for preventing and resolving conflicts, including mediation.

I should like to respond to the remarks made by the Ambassador of Armenia concerning the events of 1915.

As is well known, genocide is a precisely defined concept in international law, and its proof requires high standards of evidence. That is why this concept must not be used lightly to promote spurious historical narratives. Moreover, the allegations of genocide regarding the events of 1915 have never been legally or historically substantiated. In the same vein, there is neither political nor legal consensus as to the nature of those events.

In that context, it is important to recognize that memory does not, on its own, constitute reality. Often, as in the case of the controversy between Turks and Armenians regarding that painful episode of their common past, national memories can clash. We believe that deriving animosity from history by trying to imprint on others an incriminating and one-sided view of the past and calling for selective compassion is not the proper way to respect the memory of many Turks, Armenians and others who lost their lives during the First World War.

It is therefore important to face history in its entirety and through the impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives so that the right lessons can be drawn from history and a common, fair memory can be reached. I believe that today's open debate is focused on the achievement of meaningful reconciliation based on shared historical understanding that helps to cement lasting peace. That is why we need to help forge an agreed and shared narrative and memory of a troubled past, rather than honing one-side narratives.

We continue to seek an open and honest dialogue with Armenia. We hope that Armenia will seize this historic opportunity to replace the language of subjective conviction with the language of objective knowledge.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): We are marking the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First Wold War. Clearly, preventive policies prior to that horrific war failed. There was no form for global governance, such as a Security Council or regional organizations, to contain events as they spiralled out of control. As Members of the United Nations, we all have a responsibility to contribute to preventing and resolving conflicts. For many years, peace and conflict resolution has been a Norwegian foreign policy priority. Each conflict has its own dynamic, and there is no magic formula for preventing and/or resolving them. Yet, based on experience, there are certain common lessons to be derived.

Conflicts do not come out of the blue. In most cases, there are clear signs when a country is spiralling downwards in a dangerous pattern. Serious or massive violations of human rights are often such precursors. It is not early warning that we lack but early action. For this reason, Norway has supported the Rights Up Front plan of action of the Secretary-General. Norway has also consistently advocated that the Security Council should make more use of the provisions laid out in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, pertaining to the pacific settlement of disputes.

Parties must be ready to talk. Attempting to resolve conflicts will be futile if the parties cling to the logic of war. Dialogue is crucial to fostering confidence or gaining insight into the other party's positions and thinking. Parties must be accompanied in changing their perception. It is hard, but doable. Somalia has been plagued by more than 20 years of devastating war, but may now have set the course for a better future. Today the challenge is to change the mindset in the Syrian conflict. We are pleased that the second Geneva Conference on Syria was convened, but prospects for ending the civil war in Syria soon remain bleak. Syria is a test case today for the Organization.

Another important element is understanding the context. A fundamental challenge for a peace mediator is to motivate the warring parties to meet at the negotiating table. Extensive knowledge of the root causes to conflict is an absolute requirement. Women must be involved in all phases and levels of negotiating processes. Norway appreciates the fact that the Secretariat has developed guidelines for effective mediation, as well as its emphasis on impartiality.

We have the tool box. In addition to mediation, there is a wide range of other tools in the United Nations toolbox for the prevention of conflicts that can be used more frequently, such as the good offices of the Secretary-General, special envoys, commissions of inquiry, truth and reconciliation commissions, arbitration, judicial settlements, and resort to regional agencies and arrangements.

When a ceasefire or a peace agreement has been signed, the real job begins. Too often we have seen how a fragile peace could not be sustained. This may be due to lack of real commitment on the part of the parties to honouring their pledges, or to the country in concern falling off the international radar screen. In 2005, we established the Peacebuilding Commission to overcome these challenges, yet room for improvement remains in the peacebuilding architecture. The 2015 review will be important in this regard. Furthermore, we are convinced that peace, security and stability are essential to long-term sustainable development and should be included in the post 2015-agenda.

Peace cannot last unless it is just. A durable peace requires all stakeholders to be engaged, which is essential for ensuring broad-based ownership. National reconciliation is a fundamental requirement. In seeking to achieve truth, justice and reconciliation, there can be no impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. This underlines the vital importance of such mechanisms as international tribunals, the International Criminal Court, commissions of inquiry and truth and reconciliation commissions.

We should always seek to further enhance the ability of the international community, and in particular the United Nations, to prevent and resolve armed conflicts. We must be ready to learn from history. Research, documentation of results and systemization of the experiences gained are crucial. As we work together to understand the trends of today in order to enable our institutions to adapt appropriately, we must keep in mind that the international order is not fixed once and for all. It is in the making. If the United Nations is to be an Organization for the twenty-first century, capable of ensuring lasting international peace, security and development, we, its Member States, need to adapt to this reality.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): At the outset, I wish to compliment you, Sir, for circulating a very substantive concept paper (S/2014/30, annex). We admire your paper because it asks us, States Members of the United Nations, to step back and reflect. You have asked us to parse the topic, to first understand the anatomy and rationale of war, to identify the lessons learned from wars, and to harness the energies of the United Nations in the quest for peace and security. In response to your piercing questions, we cannot come up with clichéd responses. This is a measure of your success.

This is also a solemn occasion. We should remember the dead and those who laid down their lives for peace or who became the unintended and hapless victims of war. Today's meeting should be about deepening our understanding of war and peace, not about political point-scoring or raising the spectres of past divisions and enmities.

The First World War, in hindsight, was avoidable. One historian has called it the twentieth century's seminal catastrophe, but in hindsight we all have 20/20 vision. It is now evident that, last century, nations were too quick to abandon diplomacy. That is not an indictment but a conclusion. Diplomacy should never be discontinued.

We know that war is brutal and recurrent. Wars kill, maim, torture and leave a trail of devastation in their wake. And yet they become a necessary evil because nations constantly prepare for wars to deter aggression. Sun Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, said that the greatest victories require no battle. Clausewitz wrote that war is the "continuation of policy by other means". War is therefore a reality, and that is why we should always be ready and equipped to avert it.

What are the lessons we have learned? One thing is clear. This century, we should not repeat the mistakes of the last. There should be no complacency. Never should we lower our guard for peace.

The comparisons with the first decades of the last century are eerie. The dawn of the last century was imbued with hope and flush with new technologies, both benign and harmful. The only difference is that today's technologies are thousands of times more beneficial or destructive. One hundred years ago, the world did not have super-computers or weapons of mass destruction. But today we do, and they are becoming much more sophisticated by the day. Last century, all sides plunged into a cataclysmic war while at the same time denouncing it as ignoble. Apparently, in the narrow sense, there was no *casus belli* for such a wide global war. Nations were sucked into the war because of their apprehensions and latent hostilities.

There is no such thing as permanent peace. If such a state were at all possible, the world's warmongers and pacifists would go out of business and the United Nations never-ending task of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war would come to an end. War can erupt anywhere and at any time. That is why we need to be vigilant. The United Nations should remain constantly watchful. There should be a system in place to stem potential threats. The United Nations is that system, but it should be used optimally.

Transient random eruptions of conflicts should not be confused with deep-rooted inter-State tensions and disputes. The desire for domination and hegemony can cause war today, as it did a century ago. To avert war, international politics should be guided not by zero-sum mindsets, but by respect for the legitimate interests and rights of other nations and peoples. We should strive to work for security for all, not a select few.

We all know that wars are destructive, expensive and debilitating for all. Once conflicts break out, they should not be allowed to drag on for years. Swift diplomacy should be set in motion to secure and build peace. In the past century, we learned that the stereotyping and mischaracterization of ethnic and religious groups and communities led to wars and horrendous pogroms. This century should not repeat that mistake. From the ashes of the First World War, the world extracted the principles — for instance, the right to self-determination — on which the United Nations was founded.

The United Nations is not getting the credit it should for what it has done for peace. If there were no United Nations, in all probability a third or a fourth world war would have broken out. The United Nations has made, kept, maintained and built peace around the world. It has invested heavily in social and economic development, human rights promotion and protection, disaster relief and environmental protection. In the past seven decades, the United Nations has been more successful in dealing with conflicts within States than between States. Festering disputes, which are much more challenging for the Security Council, have been shelved because of the dictates of realpolitik. The United Nations is forced to grapple with contingent or chronic conflicts by using the enforcement mandate of Chapter VII of its Charter, but there is inadequate utilization of Chapter VI for the pacific settlement of disputes and preventive diplomacy.

We urge the Security Council to use the full range of diplomatic means in its toolbox: negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies and arrangements and, last but not least, the Secretary-General's good offices. Engagement using those means, even if it is on a back burner, is better than no engagement at all.

We have to strike a fine balance between reconciliation and criminal justice. That is important, not only to the healing process for societies and States riven by conflict, but also to preventing relapses and building peace. Again, in that context the Security Council should not be oblivious to the root causes of conflicts and wars. It is a fact that more money is being spent on conflicts than on ways to deal with the drivers of conflict. Poverty, hunger, competition over natural resources, climate change, bad governance and a lack of the rule of law propel people to conflict.

In a sense, contemporary doctrine and practice are skewed more to conflict management than to conflict prevention or conflict resolution. More efforts should therefore be made to address the outstanding issues and the socioeconomic drivers that fuel hostilities. In our region, we seek peace, security, stability and prosperity for all. We are exploring all avenues for conflict resolution, reconciliation and economic cooperation. We shall continue to support the United Nations peacekeeping. It is incumbent on us all to oppose the dark forces of extremist ideologies, terrorism and asymmetric war that undermine peace and harmony.

Finally, we need a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, which has been mentioned in the Chamber a couple of times today. The reform should reflect the aspirations of all States, not the ambitions of a few. It should not replicate past patterns but prepare us for a dynamic future.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Several delegations have requested the floor to make further statements. I would ask each delegation to limit itself to one additional statement. I will begin by giving the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The statement made today by the representative of Georgia was most unfortunate. Such attacks on my country call into question the solidity of the current Georgian leadership and its desire to normalize relations with Russia. If we desire stable peace, as has been said today by a number of delegations, we must recognize the new geopolitical realities in the Caucasus and the emergence of the two sovereign, independent States of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. They must be engaged in dialogue on equal footing in order to ensure stability and prosperity in the region.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to respond to three issues raised by the representative of Japan in his statement this afternoon.

First, Yasukuni Shrine is a facility that enshrines not only ordinary soldiers but also Class A war criminals from the Second World War and many Japanese Imperial Army and military police personnel who inflicted the most unimaginable atrocities on the peoples of the region during the wars and during its colonial rule. As mentioned by the Japanese representative, Japan's political leader recently paid tribute to the Yasukuni Shrine, despite the strong appeals not to do so issued by many countries of the region and in the world. The Japanese representative conveniently said that the Prime Minister did so to make peace. How preposterous is that?

Worshipping heinous war criminals cannot bring any peace to a region where the people have suffered so much from the heinous acts of those honoured criminals. Paying tribute to the Yasukuni Shrine is nothing more than an attempt to glorify its past. The explanation that the Government offers can be received only as unintelligent to outsiders. If Japan truly wants to actually contribute to world peace, it is most important for Japan to face up to history and to build trust by expressing deep remorse and apologizing to the Government and the people in the region.

On the second issue of comfort women, which actually means forced sexual slavery, administered by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War, we cannot but express again our utmost disappointment in the statement made by Japan. Despite the 1996 report of United Nations Special Rapporteur Coomaraswamy (E/CN.4/1996/53) and the 1998 report of Special Rapporteur McDougall (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13), which firmly underscored the legal responsibility of Japan for the comfort women, Japan has never accepted legal responsibility. Instead, Japan has made continuous attempts to redefine the issue as a charity and humanitarian on.

No, the issue is one of a crime against humanity, requiring judicial justice and accountability, not charity. That issue is not a dead issue, as my delegation stated this morning, because the victims of those heinous crimes are still alive. Further, lamentably, some Japanese leaders have even been saying that such sexual slavery was committed not only by Japan but also be other countries as well, and they ask why Japan alone should feel remorseful, ashamed or even responsible. Let me reiterate that contrary to Japan's wish, the issue will not disappear until the Japanese Government acknowledges its legal responsibility and takes measures that are acceptable to the victims.

Finally, on the issue of revising the textbook, today we have reflected on the horrendous scourge of world wars and the lessons that we have learned from those horrific experiences. First among the core lessons we can draw from today's deliberations is the courage to confront the past with honesty and, secondly, based on that, the need to make efforts aimed at reconciliation — reconciliation with the past and reconciliation with the victims, for the sake of a peaceful future. Those lessons should be passed on to future generations through education so that they do not repeat what previous generations had gotten wrong.

This afternoon the Japanese representative justified the recent decision by the Japanese Government to revise a textbook for Japanese students, including on Japan's unlawful territorial claims against neighbouring countries. Our reflection on the world wars clearly showed that antagonism and hostilities ultimately lead to conflict and tension. Japan's move to indoctrinate its younger generations with inaccurate historical information will only sow permanent discord in future generations, resulting in tragedy.

In conclusion, I cannot but raise a question about what kind of peace Japan is trying to contribute to through its recent proactive strategy.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by thanking you again for organizing today's debate and, most especially, we appreciated your statement this morning.

Rwanda takes the floor again to respond to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to recall here that this morning Rwanda made a statement in the context of today's discussion about peace and the quest for a lasting peace, for permanent peace. Basing ourselves on your statement, Mr. President, in which you recalled that in 1961 there were already United Nations forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United

Nations Operation in the Congo. Already in 1961, United Nations forces were sent and 53 years later there is still crisis and conflict in the country.

Our statement was made in the context of the debate about the quest for permanent peace. Our criticism was directed against the United Nations and its inability to support the Congolese to find permanent peace. But then we heard the unfortunate statement made by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in which he accused Rwanda of all sorts of bad things, of being the source of all evil, of supporting the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) without offering any evidence whatsoever. We have seen the various reports that have been distributed; none of them contained the smallest shred of evidence.

It is important to understand the problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo correctly. We need to ask ourselves questions on an ongoing basis. Was it Rwanda that assassinated the Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in 1961? No. Was it Rwanda that was source of the secession of Katanga? No. Was Rwanda responsible for putting Mobutu Sese Seko, a billionaire dictator with castles in the south of France and bank accounts in Switzerland while his people were dying of hunger, into power and supporting him? No, it was not Rwanda. Was it Rwanda that, in 1994, welcomed and supported the Interahamwe after they committed the genocide in my country? No. Who in the Congo did not separate the refugees? It was not Rwanda; it was the regime in place at that time, and the United Nations was incapable of separating and disarming the Interahamwe militia, which continues even today to wreak havoc in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the form of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). They are same people who fled Rwanda in 1994.

We were therefore a little bit astonished by the statement made by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the very simple and good reason that today the armed forces of that country are cooperating with the FDLR, the very people who perpetrated the genocide in Rwanda, who killed Congolese in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and who even attacked Rwanda in several periods in the 1990s and the following decade.

I therefore think that it is unfortunate for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to refer to a movement such as the M-23, which has ceased all activities, for the purposes of accusing Rwanda one more time, while there is movement and activity on the ground that is causing desolation and misfortune in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwanda has tried to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo within the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in order to reach a peace agreement with the M-23. Last year, in February, we signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region precisely to try to tackle the deep-seated causes of the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, namely and principally, poor governance, a lack of State authority and security and the inequitable distribution of resources. Rwanda is still committed to that path, and we will continue to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a bilateral or multilateral context, but we would like our Congolese friends to help us help them and we would ask that they take a positive approach so that we can help them to resolve their issues.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to take the floor for a second time this afternoon. I am making this statement in response to the statement just made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The day is coming to an end and it really does not give me any pleasure to engage in a discussion that drags us far away from the topic of today's debate. Unfortunately, instead of contributing to a meaningful discussion, Russia yet again tried to put forward a misleading interpretation of the facts that on numerous occasions have been reflected in relevant documents adopted by various international and regional organizations, including the Security Council. I only offered the experience of my country as a case study to provide lessons learned so that the international community can draw appropriate lessons for its future work from the difficulties and tragedies we have endured. We believe that is what we should be debating and reflecting upon.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): As I stated earlier, Japan doubts that the Security Council is the most appropriate forum for dealing with individual issues of the past. However, I am obliged to take the floor again in response to the interventions that have just been made and to the statement made by the representative of another delegation after I had delivered my earlier statement.

Japan's positions on the relevant points were expressed thoroughly in my original statement this afternoon. I would therefore just like to remind the Council and all participants today of that fact.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): We apologize for taking the floor again. We have just heard remarks that do not make any sense. Previously, the Japanese representative also made totally senseless remarks. Concerning those remarks, let me emphasize three points.

First, the Japanese representative talked about a peace-loving Japan. I do not know any country in this Chamber that thinks of Japan as a peace-loving nation. When one looks at Japanese politicians and the diplomats who come here, representing the politicians, they say totally different things and present totally different pictures of Japan. Domestically, the politicians say that their policies on the invasion, military occupation and colonial period of the Second World War were about a war of liberation for Asian people. Prime Minister Abe himself raised the question of rewriting the definition of the aggression that their ancestors conducted. How can one say that Japan is peace-loving?

Secondly, the Japanese delegation talked about comfort women. I do not think that the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea even needs to talk about that, because it has already been clarified. One thing to emphasize, however, is the fact that Japan can never — ever — erase history. As the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea mentioned in its previous remarks, that was a most extraordinary and spectacular crime against humanity. No nation in the world, in the history of humankind or the history of Statehood, has mobilized, under the name of comfort women, sex slaves for the soldiers of their invasion army. The Japanese are the only ones to have committed that crime.

Concerning the Yasukuni shrine, it contains the remains of 14 convicted Class A war criminals who were punished under international law. That is not something that can be disputed here.

The issue of revised textbooks is a very sensitive one that concerns educating future generations about history. Japan is trying its best to educate its youth about militarism, something at which their ancestors did not succeed. It is one thing to tell them and to warn them, but they should learn the lessons of what happened to their ancestors after militarism — a defeat they will repeat if they continue to go in that direction.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Charter of the United Nations entrusts the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This Chamber is a symbol of the victory of the peoples of the world against fascist wars of aggression and a symbol of justice conquering evil. The post-war international order based on the Charter must be adhered to and maintained.

The theme of today's Security Council meeting is "War, its lessons and the search for a permanent peace". In order to draw lessons from war and maintain lasting peace, it is necessary to face history squarely and use it as a mirror.

Facts speak louder than words. In his statement this afternoon, the Japanese representative offered justifications on the issues of the Yasukuni shrine, comfort women and textbooks. A moment ago, he did the same thing again. In fact, Japan is only digging itself into a deeper hole by trying to whitewash its history.

The international community knows what kind of a place the Yasukuni shrine is, and Japan knows it all too well. It was a spiritual symbol of Japanese militarism. To this day, it openly glorifies and justifies Japanese militarist wars of aggression. Japan still openly claims that the Pacific war that it launched was for self-defence purposes. It is still accusing the International Military Tribunal for the Far East of conducting illegal trials. And it still venerates 14 Class A war criminals and more than 1,000 other war criminals as deities. In his statement this afternoon, the Japanese representative referred to them as people who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. That once again proves that Japan is still hanging on to its erroneous view of its history of aggression. Japanese Prime Minister Abe's visit to the Yasukuni shrine is an affront to historical justice, human conscience, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the world's victory over fascism and the post-war international order.

During the Second World War, the Japanese army forcibly recruited large numbers of comfort women from China, Korea and many other countries and committed egregious crimes against humanity. Thus far, the Japanese Government has not offered an apology or compensation for the issue of comfort women, and, by rights, it should continue to be jointly condemned by the international community.

Japan's purpose in revising the textbooks is to falsify history and distort the facts. What the Japanese Government should do is to effectively comply with the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation and other relevant rulings and cease all actions that violate and undermine the territorial sovereignty of neighbouring countries.

The Japanese justifications raise several questions. The United Nations has 193 States Members. Apart from Japan, have any other country's leaders gone to pay homage to Class A and class B war criminals of the Second World War? Why has Japan chosen the opposite side on this issue than that of the international community? Are we to understand that to pay tribute to war criminals and glorify wars of aggression is to declare a wish for peace? The Charter puts it very clearly: the founding of the United Nations was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The war criminals venerated at the Yasukuni shrine are criminals responsible for those war crimes. Are we to understand that to pay tribute and homage to those war criminals is to comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter? Are we to understand that altering textbooks and covering up the truth of history is the correct way to make future generations realize the mistakes that have been made and avoid the path of war? By saying those things, the Japanese representative was only deceiving himself and others. If the Japanese leaders really wish to distance themselves from wars of agression, the history of wars of agression the war criminals of the Second World War, they should know better than to engage in such justifications.

Abe's acts gravely undermine the political foundation of Sino-Japanese relations. He himself closed the door to a dialogue with China. What he must do now is not to provide justifications for himself but to effectively mend his ways, relinguish his erroneous outlook on history, which runs counter to the human conscience and international justice, and correctly understand and deeply repent the Japanese history of militarist aggression. He must comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and truly win the trust of the neighbouring Asian countries and the international community. The people of the world will watch Japan's actions.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Armenia has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): Having followed the discussions in a constructive manner, which is particularly appreciated given the participation of countries that are not often in agreement with each other, one cannot but regret Turkey's continuation of the policy of negation and its unchanged rhetoric. Allow me to briefly touch upon the misinterpretations that we heard from the Ambassador of Turkey on the issue of the Armenian genocide.

I think that the delegations present in the Chamber were surprised to hear the distorted explanations about the undeniable fact of the Armenian genocide, which took the lives of 1.5 million Armenians — Armenian children, women and men living in the Ottoman Empire during the Young Turk regime. Let me refresh the memory of the representative of Turkey, in particular.

The systematic and planned slaughter of the entire nation began on 24 April 1915 and went on until 1923. It is defined as genocide and is known as the Armenian genocide. It began on that fateful day when the Ottoman Turks rounded up 300 Armenian community leaders in Constantinople — writers, philosophers and professionals — who were executed. On the same day, 5,000 of the poorest Armenians were butchered in the streets of the city. Then the brutal executions spread to the entire Armenian community in Anatolia. Deportations and killings were carried out. There were death marches to the deserts. The mass killings were condemned by the representatives of the British, French, Russian, German and Austrian Governments stationed in Turkey. That crime has been recognized by a number of Member States and international organizations, including the United Nations, the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary body, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

We are particularly sensitive about this subject because the policy of genocide carried out by the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the indiscriminate extermination and slaughter of Armenians, has remained unrecognized by Turkey despite the efforts of the international community to recall and acknowledge the crime. I would just say to the representative of Turkey that it is time to realize — and that is why this thematic debate has been convened — that in order to be part of the civilized world, one should avoid negationism and resorting to the denial of historical facts in order to conceal past injustices, particularly mass atrocity crimes that have been committed.

In concluding, my country believes that Turkey's recognition of the Armenian genocide would lead to the removal of psychological barriers between our nations. As we approach the centennial commemoration of that crime in 2015, we call upon the United Nations and its Member States, as well as other international organizations and civil society groups, to continue taking appropriate steps and actions for the recognition of that crime against humanity in order to prevent its horrendous repetition in other parts of the world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Turkey has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Şahinol (Turkey): I would like to warmly thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. However, the theme of today's meeting indicated that its purpose was not to revive past conflicts between nations. Rather, it sought to find compromises between nations for the future of the world. We came to this meeting in that understanding. We did not want to discuss events of a century ago.

However, it seems that we have different understandings of the past. It is quite natural that other delegations have different interpretations of past events. The matter that the Armenian delegation has raised is one such issue. It is obvious that we have different interpretations of those events. We did not say that nothing happened in 1915. We know about those events but they do not fit the definition of genocide that was set out in the 1948 Genocide Convention.

When we look at examples of rulings by international courts, we can see that genocide is a crime. It is clearly defined and requires high standards of proof. Let me put forward an example. Let us look at Bosnia and Herzegovina. The International Criminal Court delivered its decision and said that genocide had taken place in Srebrenica, but the Court could not establish such a crime in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Why was that? It was because the Court could not find enough evidence of such events taking place in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. And that happened in our time. We all witnessed those events. Although we had the technology — television and all kinds of communications — the Court could not prove that there had been genocide in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A delegation now raises the fact that the 1915 events amount to genocide in the absence of any ruling by an international court. So how can we be expected to accept such prejudices? We should not be hostage to the past. We should look to the future. We believe that by doing so, we can overcome past difficulties, look at the future together, come to a compromise and live peacefully together. That is why we would like once again to recall that we should not hold our future hostage to the events of a century ago.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.